

SERMONS
ON
RETIREMENT, SELF-DENIAL,
THE RESURRECTION,

AND ON THE
DIVINITY AND OPERATIONS OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT:

PARTICULARLY ADAPTED FOR CHRISTIAN CONSIDERATION DURING THE
SEASONS OF

LENT, EASTER, AND WHITSUNTIDE.

SELECTED FROM
THE WORKS OF THE MOST EMINENT ENGLISH DIVINES
OF THE
SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES.

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

THE influence of Christianity on the state of the world is acknowledged, but it is not estimated with any degree of care or exactness: many are the moral forces which it brings to bear on every portion of society; but who thinks of attempting to measure or reckon up the almost countless effects which result from their action? Whatever may have been said of the weakness of human reason, in its conflicts with passion and a perverse will, men of elevated thought have at all times exercised a very conspicuous influence over the opinions of their fellow-men. The ancient systems of philosophy were, without exception, based on the supposition that we require much help from wisdom to make us happy; that good has to be sought and protected by many a complicated process of reason; and that there is a constant struggle through the whole range of existence between happiness and misery, and right and wrong. In the mass of

argument, of persuasive exhortations and maxims, which was accumulated in the illustration of these systems, every faculty of the human mind was appealed to, every chord of the human heart sometimes made to thrill with deep and intense emotion. The impressions thus produced on those who occupied the highest stations in the schools of wisdom, were gradually communicated to the humblest of their brethren; and large classes of society were thereby imbued with feelings which confessed the power of those mighty master spirits who ventured to examine the laws and tendencies of being. But in the little practical influence which the united systems of philosophy possessed, we find a demonstration of the melancholy fact, that that which flows from the heart or intellect of man, has an inherent imperfection, which prevents it from effecting any important improvement in human nature. The reasonableness, the truth, and beauty of all that genius creates may be felt; but the homage we render it is the homage of admiration, not of subjection; and in rendering this there is a consciousness of equality, which deprives the voice of the eloquent and praise-rewarded teacher of most of his authority.

Thus the ancient world was not without light on many points of elevated morality; nor did it wholly fail in recognizing the power of those inward principles on which, as on an everlasting

foundation, the noble fabric of humanity stands fronting the skies. But it is an indubitable fact, that notwithstanding the efforts which were made to resist the depressing influences of sensuality, the minds of men did, for ages, lie grovelling with their passions, in doubt or despair of ever obtaining freedom. The thirst for life was never satisfied : the path of existence ran through a desert, where there were a few ancient wells, but no fountains flowing into the ocean. It was only that small body of men, who were justly regarded as the wonders of their race, on whom the light of reason shed a hope of immortality : for the rest, they could scarcely look upon themselves as otherwise than passing shadows, or bubbles for death to burst : there was no savour of life in their souls ; and thus, from one end of the earth to another there was an incessant talk of eternal night and nothingness. The mother brought up her children with the mother's natural care and fondness ; but if she chanced to think of death, she felt as if she held but dust and ashes to her bosom. The friend loved his friend as friends love each other now, but when sickness came, or old age drew nigh, they had to think of nothing but an eternal farewell. All was hopelessness, or that which is almost as bad, and perhaps worse, a harrowing, feverish state of doubt ; and generation after generation seemed to perish like the leaves of

successive autumns. The poet's melancholy image was all but reality.

If we inquire now how vice grew to such a height, when the principles of morality were so far from being unknown, or how it was that the noble efforts which philosophy made towards enlightening mankind were of so little avail, the answer will be found in this, that the whole system of ethics, and that knowledge of intellectual nature which belonged to the province of reason, had no connexion with the faith which pointed to Deity or heaven. The philosopher and the scholar, it is supposed, believed not in the gods: if they did, neither could their faith receive any support from their studies, nor their reason any help from their creed: but the people at large, depending chiefly on what was taught them respecting the nature and will of their deities, could only find, in the scattered rays of purer truth which occasionally reached them, a light too clear for the light of their heavens—a revelation of glory which had as little similarity to the splendours of Olympus or the happiness of Elysium, as the sublime beauty of nature to the wanton luxuries of art. To decide between the claims thus made by popular tradition on the one hand, and reason, throned in her secret asylum, on the other, was rarely attempted, and error was worshipped because her antiquity could be traced,

while truth had only, to appearance, its every-day birth in the minds of the few and the isolated. But the gloom of error and corruption, is the night in which the soul sleeps without dreaming of its original destiny: and this was the case with myriads in the anti-evangelical ages. The sun of truth never rose above the horizon: but meteors of every shape and hue sprung from the noxious vapours of sin, and appearing like stars in the dense night, were revered as guides throughout the disordered world. To one small portion of the human race God had continued the knowledge of his name, and the elements of his law; but both the one and the other were only revealed so as to form the surface of a deep mystery, not then to be penetrated. A light, pure and splendid, shone around them: no one could look upon it without feeling that it came from above: but it was a light announcing rather than revealing the presence of God; and truth—though its messengers, and its ordinances, its laws, and signs, and emblems were there—was not itself substantially known or present.

Now let us suppose that in this state of things, a simple, but full and direct, revelation had been made of the immortality of the soul—a revelation couched in such terms that minds of every class might comprehend it, and see the whole force of the evidence by which it was established. The

immediate consequence of such a discovery would be equally striking and important. A being whose thoughts and purposes had been adapted to the humiliating notion of a brief and mere earthly existence,—who had been taught by the impulses of his sensual nature, that the indulgence of passion was the highest happiness to which he was born, and that when his body should waste away, and become dust, he himself would perish;—a being whose whole intellectual course was confined to the space of which a momentary lust was the starting point, and his power of enjoyment the utmost boundary, could be subjected to no greater change than that of finding himself immortal in his nature, and the heir of whatever the illimitable future might confer upon his species. It may with safety be laid down as an axiom, that a man's determinations are the counterpart of his hopes. This is the case in respect to the kind of objects he pursues: it is also so in regard to the extensiveness and fixedness of his designs. *Spatio brevi spem longam reséces* was the consistent maxim of the Epicurean poet: a far-extending hope was fraught with danger and grievous disappointment to one whose term of existence could scarcely promise the possibility of its completion: but in proportion as the probable duration of life was increased, hope might more safely extend its views; and when no limit was left to the continuance of

conscious existence, neither was any needed for the hopes and aspirations of the soul. But with views thus enlarged, and the mind quickened into constant action by the prospect of future good, the moral being must of necessity begin to develop its better qualities, and assert its superiority over the mere animal. The torpor of indifference, or the madness of sensual intoxication, will be yielded to less readily; a desire to make the most of experience, to know more of nature, and approach as near as possible the verge of the gulf which separates the seen from the unseen, will exercise a powerful influence on the mind; and truth will every day become of more value and importance, because more manifestly necessary to the security of happiness.

A revelation of the immortality of the soul, in its simplest form, would realize much of what has here been stated, in any age of the world. But many circumstances may be imagined which would render its effects more remarkable at one period than another, and even, though not intrinsically, yet, in respect to the temporal state of mankind, more valuable. There are seasons in which our race has to struggle less than at others, to supply the necessities of life; in which there is a larger proportion of calm and security; when diseases are less frequent, death more tardy in its approaches, and the satisfactions of appetite and passion less dear or perilous in the purchase. At

such times, the minds of men may be supposed to look with more complacency on their condition, and to suffer less from the anxious suspense which, in periods of toil and affliction, weigh down their spirits. Now, for some ages previous to the coming of our Saviour, the world had been reaping, and gathering into its storehouses, that is, into the seats of its several governments, and into the homes of individual men, the harvest of evil and misery, which had been sown, first, at the fall of our great progenitors, and then at the several periods in which the mighty spirit of rebellion and anarchy came visibly forth to exert his right upon us. War had glutted itself with carnage; licentiousness loosened the holiest bonds of social existence; slavery was defended as the necessary lot of millions; and the whole mass of mankind felt, and writhed under, the lash of the tormentor. The only mitigation of these accumulated evils, was that occasionally afforded by the soothing voices of those few exalted and finer spirits, who kept some portion of their natural freedom, and who loved to employ their eloquence in asserting the beauty and nobility of nature. Poetry and philosophy still cultivated their green recesses in the desert; and sometimes coming forth into the world, startled their fellow-mortals, as with a song heard in the night, from their gross and heavy slumbers. But the sound had no multiplying echo: there was no

focal point wherein the rays of intellectual light might accumulate, and fire a torch for the guidance of the fallen race.

That the metaphor is fairly illustrative of the reality, is proved by the sober testimony of undoubted history. But let us, for the moment, suppose that when the world was in this condition, one of those noble-minded men of whom we have spoken, had discovered arguments, or a method by which he could secure the immediate attention of his fellow-beings to the better principles of their nature, and lead them safely to the acquisition of good and happiness;—is it to be doubted that he would have readily employed his power? or is it not, in fact, proved that he would, by the manner in which the best of the learned men of antiquity did exercise their genius? Let us further suppose that he had not only discovered truth, and the right method of communicating it, by the strength of his own intellect, but that light had been poured into his heart from on high, and that he found himself thereby consecrated as a teacher of mankind;—is it to be imagined that he would have kept back the blessing which he received in charge for the good of his suffering brethren? The answer to this question is at once manifest, and we must at the same time see, that in proportion to the benevolence and the power of the individual, would be the decision of his conduct; and consequently, that, if we sup-

pose a divine instead of a human being employed in this work, the probability of his undertaking the instruction and enlightenment of mankind is increased in proportion to the increased perfection of the agent. And while this is true of the agent, it must also be true in respect to Him who sets him at work, that is, of God himself: for unless we deny him the attribute of love, He cannot be supposed less willing to deliver his creatures from darkness than any one of those creatures would be to deliver the rest, were it in his power.

We may conclude from such considerations as these, that nothing could be more consistent with the benevolence of God than the communication of a truth which should make man the conscious master of immortality; and that in thus enriching his mind, he would be supplying him with the best possible means of recovering his lost dignity and happiness. But the wondrous act of benevolence has been performed: the human race has received from its great Author this rich dowry of intelligence; and in an age of the world when it was the sole means of saving mankind from irrecoverable degeneracy. To regard a benefit with less interest when it has been conferred, than when it is viewed prospectively, or theoretically, is the common course of human feeling; but to neglect a blessing which is always increasing in the power of its operation, and the application of which becomes every hour more necessary to our safety, is

the extreme of folly : yet thus is Christianity disregarded by millions of our race ; and the regenerating application of the doctrine of the resurrection resisted, or treated with contempt. • Had such an important truth been in the power of man to reveal, there is every reason to believe that it would have been listened to with eager and influential attention : delivered by God, it is heard with backwardness and mistrust. Notwithstanding, however, the little readiness evinced by mankind to adopt the evangelical law for its renewing and life-giving efficacy, the secret influences of it are felt throughout the world. The darkness has been broken through which kept us enslaved to ignorance and superstition ; and the Gospel, making • the profoundest maxims of eternal truth the common property of the world, has given the mind a new atmosphere to breathe in ; and reason new confidence in its efforts. Nor is it to be doubted but that the moral atmosphere, thus cleared of its impurities, is itself, mysteriously and secretly, often imbued with some portion of the light which ever follows the track of the divine Spirit, and announces his presence : for though the Lord deny this precious gift in its converting strength to those who seek not for it, yet hardly can the kingdom of heaven, which is full of its splendour, exist amid the nations, without some portion of those lustrous rays of truth scattering their light beyond its bor-

ders :—the dew of heavenly blessing overflowing the full vessels ; the sound of heavenly harpings, heard outside the mansion. Thus the world becoming imbued with a certain degree of knowledge, through the work and the presence of Christ, which could have been derived from no other source, he is, in a very general sense, ‘ the light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world ;’ it being utterly impossible now to separate, or distinguish that knowledge which a man may seem to acquire by his natural ability, from that which, intimately mixed up with it, though unknown probably to himself, he entirely owes to the silent operations of the Lord, and the unobserved progress of his kingdom.

But while a benefit of vast importance to the world at large is thus communicated through the medium of Christianity, its direct influence on the state of the many thousands who own its sway in their souls, is the beautiful manifestation of a sublime mystery, in which the love of God is seen regenerating, as it originally created, the whole being of humanity. In the almost innumerable circumstances which the plan of redemption presents for contemplation, not one exists in which divine benignity is not eminently conspicuous : ‘ Rejoice in the Lord always ; and again, I say, rejoice,’ describes the true feeling of every devout mind, after a long and earnest consideration of the

Gospel ; and the revelation of immortality is the golden band which holds all its invitations, its promises, and instructions together, so as to offer, them at once as a precious boon to the human heart : and this revelation is so made as to remove every cause of doubt that can exist in a thoughtful and ingenuous spirit ; and to render the comprehension of the mystery easy and familiar to the humblest understanding that rebels not against the law of God.

The pathway to eternity is open, and human life is declared to be commensurate with its untold ages. For this intelligence we are indebted to the Son of God : but with the revelation of our immortality we receive a further revelation of the mystery by which this endless life is beautified, like a stream running through beds of amaranths, with unfading delights : and to the Son of God are we indebted for this also : for the eternal love of the Father having decreed, that both our souls and bodies should be saved, and that neither the flux and convulsions of nature, nor the fury of sin should destroy them, the Son has executed the decree, and by his atonement both justified the promise of the Almighty, and raised our nature to the level of his mercy.

It was remarked at the beginning of this Essay, that the little practical influence enjoyed by the philosophy of the ancients, may in great part be

attributed to its separation from the received religions. Philosophy and faith both appeal to the souls of men : their ultimate object is properly the same—the sanctifying of the human heart, the naturalization of truth in the world ; the reconciling of men to God, by enabling and inducing them to lay upon his altar the sacrifice of pure and elevated affections. When philosophy and religion are opposed to each other, both suffer in their general influences ; for, though the one is chiefly taken up with the examination of principles, and the other supposes them known and received, it is in the same substratum of truth both are expected to begin and terminate their course. Now, one of the grand differences between Christianity and the religions of the heathen world is this, that it is not opposed to the inquiries carried on by the learned and the philosophical ; that it does not diffuse itself, as polytheism did, in the manner of a vast pool, contented with covering an immense extent of flat surface with its shallow waters, while every little hillock and pointed eminence remain bare and dry : it has nothing to conceal ; but much in its very character and structure to stimulate mental activity. If its mysteries are incomprehensible, it is in the same manner that the depths of the purest ether are unfathomable : if it warn us against questioning what we cannot comprehend, it is because, in this as in every other particular, it has the most perfect

respect to the laws of human nature, to the extent and limitation and proper exercise of its powers. In all systems of philosophy the discovery of causes is the main purpose of inquiry ; and to know the nature of the great First Cause, the acknowledged privilege of the clearest and most exalted intellects : but Christianity refers at once to this universal source of existence, as the object to be continually contemplated in the course of our progress ; it describes the nature of this sublime subject of inquiry ; and makes every attribute of divinity appreciable to the understanding, by showing it in its action on the conditions and destinies of our race. Thus religion and philosophy may sit down together at the same heavenly banquet of truth, and each derive strength and vigour, according to their respective origin and nature, from the same food. There is, therefore, no irremediable injury inflicted on the great mass of mankind by their exclusion from the schools of philosophy. Philosophy is glad to be their fellow-guest in the temple ; and every believer in the gospel feels ennobled as the Lord's freedman. The perfect law of liberty rules in his mind : his soul is as free as truth : it is the will of God that it rise as high as it can by its own force, and when that fails, he gives it the wings of his Spirit.

That the application of any discovery made by reason to the wants and anxieties of human feeling

is uncertain and limited, admits of the strongest proof that can be afforded by experience. Its effect on the discoverers themselves, on the very minds in which the image of virtue has been generated, is, if history speak true, highly problematical. What trust, therefore, can be placed in these means for the renewing of men's minds in general? Or is it not evident, from this consideration, that the light and heat necessary to the success of such a process must be diffused from a source sufficiently elevated to reach, in its descent and re-ascension, intellects of every class, and however numerous or widely separated? And in what can such a source of illumination exist, except in a divine religion, which having for its substance and object the attributes of God, can never fail in the necessary qualities demanded by an active faith? But Christianity not only answers to this; it reaches the remotest wish of human nature, considered in its primary principles; and is, therefore, intimately connected, not only with the highest and grandest qualities of the soul, developed in the workings of pure reason, but with the simple yearnings of sympathy, and every movement of the heart. In the mythological religions, whatever was essentially human had its god; but there is nothing in human passion by which it can dignify or give beauty or interest to itself: whenever passion has a true natural charm or grace, it derives that ornament

from the corresponding intellectual movement, or from a principle of our being higher and nobler than itself: but where a deity is supposed to exist as the source of that passion, it is itself the thing worshipped as the highest good, and presents its claim to obedience as an isolated power of nature. In the revolution which Christianity has caused in our systems of philosophy and ethics, every passion has its proper laws, and its corresponding spiritual sentiment. Thus nature becomes dignified by a constant appeal to the fountain-head of good; and that which would be doomed to darkness and corruption, were it left to itself, is endued with a lustre pure and bright as that which shines in the innermost recesses of the soul. To every point, therefore, which respects the happiness or improvement of man, and which might be made the subject of philosophical discourse, the religion of Christianity looks with loving and grave attention: nothing is omitted; nothing forgotten which concerns us: it breathes throughout the tender, cautious, and comprehensive wisdom of perfect benevolence; and that which it offers to effect it has effected, and is still effecting for thousands in every quarter of the globe.

The evidence of the truth of Christ's resurrection, or of the divine origin of the religion itself, is in one respect peculiar. Enough is done for the conviction of the understanding when the same degree of

proof, proportionable to its importance, is brought for the truth of our faith, as is required for the establishment of any other system on which our safety or happiness depends. But it so happens, that the allowed conviction of the understanding is in this instance not sufficient to bring into willing subjection the whole spiritual being. Something is still wanting to leave the inner man without excuse for resistance; and reason having conquered the difficulties of the general inquiry, as the subject of historical evidence, or comparison of principles, demands of the soul why it does not yield at once to the palpable force of its deductions. The explanation of the mystery may perhaps be found in this,—that as truth is certainly not limited by the power of the observer, so, while the understanding is satisfied as to that which comes immediately under observation, there may be a vast body of truth lying far out of the reach of simple historical evidence, and claiming the assent of the mind, not on the strength or correspondence of certain facts, but on the existence and everlasting operation of spiritual principles. When truth has especial relation to these, if the higher faculties of the soul remain unexerted or unsatisfied, truth is not apprehended, the evidence proper to it in this respect is not applied, and no conviction consequently is felt or acknowledged. Now religion, in all its forms, has a large portion of its evidence lying beyond the

province of historical, or mere argumentative, so far as it is verbal, proof: and Christianity does by its very nature declare this, and claims of believers, in plain and distinct language, a species of assent for which the understanding, satisfied of the historical verity, cannot lay foundations sufficiently deep or extensive. 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,' is the summing up of a statement which sets this matter in the clearest light. 'My speech and my preaching,' says the messenger of God, 'was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. But, as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in

him ? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God ; that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth ; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. „ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' ¹

In this passage we find the most explicit account of the nature of Christian evidence, as soon as it has passed the limit of historical testimony, and enters upon that grand and infinitely more extensive province in which it appeals to the internal nature of man, and to the capabilities of his spirit for converse with the prime and essential Author of truth. Nor is it a portion of Scripture seized upon as a passage fortunately discovered among the mass of evangelical revelations, a passage distinguished from, or remarkable when compared with, the rest : the sentiments it imparts are a portion of the general sentiment of the religion ; deprived of which its different doctrines would want harmony among each other, and applicability, because of

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 4—14.

their pure spirituality, to the human soul. If Christianity were capable of no higher proof than that which belongs to the consideration of its history or its morality, we might indeed establish its divine origin; but the truth of its doctrines, except as a portion of a religion so established, would be without proof: they could not be proved by testimony, by comparison, or by analogy. ‘If any man doeth the will of my Father, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God’—they can only be established in the heart, as true, when the heart, sanctified and enlightened, is at liberty, and has the will, to receive them as truth communicated not only by, but with the divine Spirit. And that which is true of Christian doctrine in general, is true also of the particular doctrine of the resurrection. The fact itself is proved by the clearest evidence. But numberless professing Christians, while the truth of it is thus established, have no feeling of delight and triumph resulting therefrom: though in many respects influenced by certain general impressions concerning it, they have evidently no ardour of hope, no earnestness of determination proportionable to the importance of such a species of knowledge. How is this? we may ask. The proper answer will be, that the knowledge of the resurrection is possessed in the form of a fact, but not in the spirit of the doctrine; and that, till the soul receives it through the com-

forting and elevating influences of heavenly grace, the power of Christ's resurrection, and the hope of our own, must remain an inconceivable mystery in the understanding.

Minds of every class, and many among them endowed with the highest qualities of intellect, have been employed on the subject of the Resurrection. We have endeavoured to afford the reader striking and edifying examples of the piety, the acuteness, and the erudition thus engaged in the cause of Christian doctrine, and in the support of a truth on which the peace of the human heart so entirely rests. In selecting the Sermons, therefore, we have not feared to choose some which present the argument in the rough form which it has assumed under the hand of weighty scholarship. Nor have we thought it right to sacrifice, because of the occasional appearance of subtlety—reasons brought from the depths of powerful minds. It would be an easy task to collect many volumes of sermons abounding in elegant phraseology, and beautiful sentiment on this subject; but in such a matter the point to be aimed at is first conviction, and then the nourishment of holy thought by food that will give it strength, and will therefore require long digesting. The study of Christian truth affords the noblest of exercises for the human mind: but in these latter times, an opinion appears to have been daily gaining ground,

that reason may rest in deep repose while contemplating the grandeur of heavenly mysteries ; and that the less the style of theology demands the exertion of thought, the better for the student. Christian simplicity, the sacrifice of which we allow could never be atoned for, suffers rather than gains by this. Simplicity is strength : the offspring of severe, reflecting, inquiring, and, therefore, self-denying and humble minds : whenever it is not combined with carefulness and energy of thought, it wants the characteristics which render it so bright a jewel in the Christian's crown :—simplicity is then voluble in talk ; as weak, and therefore obscure, in argument as it is wordy in expression ; humble in pretension, but often confident and proud in spirit ; soft in its appeals, but rarely earnest ; smooth, but never direct in its course ; always ready to acknowledge what it dares not attempt, but never trembling at the awfulness of truth, because never caring to lift its veil. How different was the simplicity of the Fathers of the church to that of their degenerate sons ! They offered not on the altar of Christ that which it had cost them little to purchase ; nor was theology with them less worthy of intense application, than science or politics is with us now. May the Great Head of the church fill the souls of his ministers with a more earnest love of divine contemplation than they have lately manifested, if we may judge by the present state of theology !

May he lead us back to the old paths and the right way : and if he should please thus to awaken a fervent spirit of zeal among us, may they for whom we labour recover at the same time the primitive humility, charity, and holiness of their forefathers !

H. S.

March 25th, 1835.

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SERMON I.
FOR EASTER-DAY.
BY DR. SOUTH.

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• [Robert South was born in 1631, and died in 1716.]



S E R M O N I. 1859

ACTS, II. 24.

Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

IT is of infinite concern to mankind, both as to their welfare in this world and the next, to preserve in their minds a full belief of a future estate of happiness or misery, into which, according to the quality of their actions here, they must for ever be disposed of hereafter; the experience of all ages having found the insufficiency of bare human restraints to control the audacious sinfulness of some tempers and dispositions, without holding them under the awe of this persuasion. From which, though some by much and long sinning, and perverse ratiocinations caused thereby, have in a great measure disentangled their consciences, yet these are but few and inconsiderable compared with the rest of the world, in whose minds, education and better principles, grafted upon the very instincts of nature, have fixed this persuasion too deep to be ever totally rooted out. And it is from the victo-

rious influence of this that the common peace of the world has been maintained against those bold invasions, which the corruption of man's nature would otherwise continually make upon it. But now as highly necessary as it is for men to believe such a future estate, yet it must be acknowledged, that with the generality of the world this belief has stood hitherto upon very false, or, at the best, very weak foundations; and, consequently, that it is of no small import to state and settle it upon better. For the doing of which the most effectual ways, I conceive, may be these two :—

1. By revelation.

2. By exemplification.

First, As to the first whereof, it must needs be, either by an immediate declaration of this great truth (not discoverable by reason) by a voice from heaven, or by God's inspiring some certain select persons with the knowledge of it, and afterwards enabling them to attest it to the world by miracles. And as this is undoubtedly sufficient in itself for such a purpose, so Providence has not been wanting, partly by revelation, and partly by tradition thereupon, to keep alive amongst men some persuasion at least of this important truth all along; as appears even from those fabulous accounts and stories which the heathen world still clothed, or rather corrupted it with. Nevertheless, such has been the prevalence of human corruption and infidelity, as in a great degree to frustrate all the impressions that bare revelation, or tradition, could make upon men's minds; while they chiefly governed their belief by the observation of their senses, which, from the daily occurring instances of mortality, show them, ' that as the

tree fell so it lay :’ and that nobody was ever seen by them to return from the mansions of the dead ; but that, for any thing they could find to the contrary, all passed into dust and rottenness, and perpetual oblivion.

Secondly, The other way therefore of convincing the world of this momentous truth (in comparison of which all science and philosophy are but trifles) must be by exemplification. That is to say, by giving the world an instance, or example of it, in some person or persons, who having been confessedly dead, should revive and return to life again. And this, one would think, should be as full and unexceptionable a proof that there may be a resurrection of men to a future estate, as could be desired ; nothing striking the mind of man so powerfully as instances and examples, which make a truth not only intelligible, but even palpable ; sliding it into the understanding through the windows of sense, and by the most familiar, as well as most unquestionable, perceptions of the eye. And accordingly, this course God thought fit to take in the resurrection of Christ ; by which he condescended to give the world the greatest satisfaction that infidelity itself could rationally insist upon. Howbeit, notwithstanding so plain an address both to men’s reason and sense too, neither has this course proved so successful for convincing of the world of a resurrection from the dead, and a future estate consequent thereupon, but that unbelief has been still putting* in its objections against it. For it is not, I confess, the interest of such as live ill in this world to believe that there shall be another ; or that they shall be sensible of any thing after death has once done its work upon them : and

therefore let truth, and Scripture, and even sense itself, say what they will for a resurrection, men, for aught appears, will for ever square their belief to their desires, and their desires to their corruptions; so that (as we find it in the 16th of Luke and last verse) 'though they should even see one rise from the dead they would hardly be persuaded of their own resurrection.' Such a sad and deplorable hardness of heart have men sinned themselves into, that nothing shall convince them but what first pleases them, be it never so much a delusion. Nevertheless, the most wise and just God is not so to be mocked, who knows, that by raising Christ from the dead, he has done all that rationally can, or ought to be done, for the convincing of mankind that there shall be a resurrection; whether they will be convinced by it or no. But now, if after all it should be asked, How is Christ's resurrection a proof that the rest of mankind shall rise from the dead too? I answer, That considered indeed as a bare instance, or example, it proves no more than that there may be such a thing; since the same Infinite Power which effected the one, may as well effect the other. But then, if we consider it as an argument, and a confirmation of that doctrine, (whereof the assertion of a general resurrection makes a principal part,) I affirm, that so taken it does not only prove that such a thing may be, but also that it actually shall be; and that as certainly, as it is impossible for the Divine Power to set its seal to a lie by ratifying an imposture with such a miracle. And thus, as Christ's resurrection irrefragably proves the resurrection of the rest of mankind, so it no less proves Christ himself to have been the Messiah; for

that, having all along affirmed himself to be so, he made good the truth of what he had so affirmed by his miraculous rising again, and so gave as strong a proof of his Messiahship, as infinite power, joined with equal veracity, could give. And upon this account we have his resurrection alleged by St. Peter for the same purpose, here in the text, which was part of his sermon to the Jews, concerning Jesus Christ; whom he proves to be their true and long-expected Messiah, against all the cavils of prejudice and unbelief, by this one invincible demonstration.

In the text then we have these three things considerable:—

First, Christ's resurrection and the cause of it, in these words, 'whom God hath raised up.'

Secondly, The manner by which it was effected, which was by 'loosing the pains of death.' And;

Thirdly, and lastly, The ground of it, which was its absolute necessity, expressed in these words: 'It was not possible that he should be holden of it.' And,

1. For the first of these, The cause of the resurrection set forth in this expression, 'whom God hath raised up.' It was such an action as proclaimed an omnipotent agent, and carried the hand of God writ upon it in broad characters, legible to the meanest reason. Death is a disease which art cannot cure: and the grave a prison which delivers back its captives upon no human summons. To restore life is only the prerogative of him who gives it. Some indeed have pretended by art and physical applications to recover the dead, but the success has sufficiently upbraided the attempt. Physic may repair and piece up

nature, but not create it. Cordials, plaisters, and fomentations cannot always stay a life when it is going, much less can they remand it when it is gone. Neither is it in the power of a spirit or demon, good or bad, to inspire a new life. For it is a creation; and to create is the incommunicable prerogative of a Power infinite and unlimited. Enter into a body they may, and so act and move it after the manner of a soul: but it is one thing to move, another to animate a carcass. You see the devil could fetch up nothing of Samuel at the request of Saul, but a shadow and a resemblance, his countenance and his mantle, which yet was not enough to cover the cheat, or to palliate the illusion. But I suppose nobody will be very importunate for any further proof of this, that if Christ was raised, it must be God, who raised him. The angel might indeed roll away the stone from the sepulchre, but not turn it into a 'son of Abraham;' and a less power than that which could do so, could not effect the resurrection.

2. I come now to the second thing, which is to show the manner by which God wrought this resurrection, set forth in those words, 'having loosed the pains of death.' An expression not altogether so clear, but that it may well require a further explication. For it may be enquired, with what propriety God could be said 'to loose the pains of death,' by Christ's resurrection, when those pains continued not till the resurrection, but determined and expired in the death of his body? Upon which ground it is, that some have affirmed, that Christ descended into the place of the damned; where during his body's abode in the grave, they say, that in his soul he really suffered the pains of

hell; and this not unsuitably to some ancient copies, which read it not *ὠδίνας θανάτου* 'the pains of death,' but *ὠδίνας ᾗδου* 'the pains of hell;' and this also with much seeming consonance to that article of the creed in which Christ is said to have 'descended into hell.' But to this I answer, That Christ suffered not any such pains in hell, as the forementioned opinion would pretend, which we may demonstrate from this, that if Christ suffered any of those pains during his abode in the grave, then it was either in his divine nature, or in his soul, or in his body. But the divine nature could not suffer, or be tormented, as being wholly impassible. Nor yet could he suffer in his soul; for as much as in the very same day of his death, that passed into paradise, which surely is no place of pain. Nor lastly, in his body; for that being dead, and consequently for the time bereaved of all sense, could not be capable of any torment. And then, for answer to what was alleged from the ancient copies, it is to be observed that the word *ᾗδου* (which some render hell,) indifferently signifies also the grave, and a state of death. And lastly, for that article of the creed in which there is mention made of Christ's descent into hell, there are various expositions of it, but the most rational and agreeable is, that it means his abode in the grave and under the state of death three days and three nights, or rather three *νυχθήμερα*, viz. part of the first, and third, (so called by a *synecdoche* of the part for the whole,) and the second entirely. Whereby, as his burial signified his entrance into the grave, so his descending into hell signified his continuance there and subjection to that estate. And thus the three parts of his humiliation in the last and grand

scene of it, do most appositely answer to the three parts of his exaltation. For, first, his death answers to his rising again. Secondly, His burial answers to his ascending into heaven. And thirdly, His descending into hell answers to his sitting at the right hand of God, in a state of never-dying glory, honour, and immortality. But, however, that his descending into hell, mentioned in the creed, cannot signify his local descent into the place of the damned, the former argument disproving his suffering the pains of hell, will, by an easy change of the terms, sufficiently evince this also. For, first, Christ could not descend according to his divine nature; since that which is infinite and fills all places, could not acquire any new place. And as for his soul, that was in paradise, and his body was laid in the grave; and being so, what part of Christ could descend into hell, (the whole Christ being thus disposed of,) needs a more than ordinary apprehension to conceive.

We are, therefore, in the next place to see, how we can make out the reason of this expression upon some other and better ground. In order to which, it is very observable, that the same word which in the Greek text is rendered by *ῥῆνας*, and in the English by pains, in the Hebrew signifies not only pain, but also a cord or band,¹ according to which it is very easy and proper to conceive, that the resurrection discharged Christ from the bands of death: besides, that this translation of the word seems also most naturally to agree with the genuine meaning of some other words in the same verse; as of *λύσας*, 'having loosed,' which is properly applicable to

¹ See Dr. Hammond's Annot. on the place.

bands and not to pains ; as also of *κρατεῖσθαι*, which signifies properly to be bound with some cord or band : so that undoubtedly this exposition would give the whole verse a much more natural and apposite construction, and withal remove the difficulty. But,

Secondly, because the evangelist St. Luke follows the translation of the Septuagint, (who, little minding the Hebrew pointings, rendered the word חבלי, not by Σχοινία, cords or bands, but by ὠδύνας, pains ;) we are, therefore, not to baulk so great an authority, but to see how the scheme of the text may be made clear and agreeable, even to this exposition.

To this therefore I answer :—

First, that the words contain in them an Hebraism, viz. the pains of death, for a painful death. The abomination of desolation, for an abominable desolation ;¹ and so the resurrection loosed Christ from a painful death, not indeed painful in *sensu composito*, as if it were so at the time of his release from it, but in a divided sense (as the logicians speak) it loosed him from a continuance under that death ; which, relating to the time of his suffering it, was so painful.

2. But secondly, I answer further. That, though the pains of death ceased long before the resurrection, so that this could not in strictness of sense be said to remove them ; yet, taking in a metonymy of the cause for the effect, the pains of death might be properly said to have been loosed in the resurrection, because that estate of death into which Christ was brought by those foregoing pains, was

¹ Matt. xxiv. 15.

then conquered and completely triumphed over. Captivity under death and the grave was the effect and consequent of those pains ; and therefore the same deliverance which discharged Christ from the one, might not improperly be said to loose him from the other. And thus, Christ was no sooner bound, but within a little time he was loosed again. He was not so much buried, as for a while deposited in the grave for a small inconsiderable space ; so that even in this respect he may not inelegantly be said to have tasted of death ; for a taste is transient, short, and quickly past. God rescued him from that estate, as a prey from the mighty, and a captive from the strong ; and though he was in the very jaws of death, yet he was not devoured. Corruption, the common lot of mortality, seized not on him : worms and putrefaction durst not approach him. His body was sacred and inviolable ; as sweet under ground as above it, and in death itself retaining one of the highest privileges of the living.

3. Come we now to the last and principal thing proposed, namely, the ground of Christ's resurrection, which was its absolute necessity, expressed in these words, 'Because it was not possible that he should be holden of it ;' and that, according to the strictest and most received sense of the word (possible.) For it was not only just and equal that Christ should not always be detained under death, because of his innocence, (as Grotius precariously, and to serve an hypothesis, would have the word, possible, here signify,) but it was absolutely necessary that he should not, and impossible that he should, continue under the bands of death, from the peculiar condition of his person, as well as upon several other accounts. And accordingly,

this impossibility was founded upon these five things:—

1. The union of Christ's human nature to the divine.

2. God's immutability.

3. His justice.

4. The necessity of Christ's being believed upon.

5. And lastly, the nature of his priesthood.

First of all then, the hypostatical union of Christ's human nature to his divine, rendered a perpetual duration under death absolutely impossible. For, how could that which was united to the great source and principle of life, be finally prevailed over by death, and pass into an estate of perpetual darkness and oblivion? Even while Christ's body was divided from his soul, yet it ceased not to maintain an intimate indissoluble relation to his divinity. It was assumed into the same person; for, according to the creed of Athanasius, 'As the soul and body make one man; so the divine nature and the human make one Christ.' And if so, is it imaginable that the Son of God could have one of his natures rent wholly from his person? His divinity (as it were) buoyed up his sinking humanity, and preserved it from a total dissolution: for, as while the soul continues joined to the body, (still speaking in *sensu composito*,) death cannot pass upon it; for as much as that is the proper effect of their separation; so, while Christ's manhood was retained in a personal conjunction with his Godhead, the bands of death were but feeble and insignificant, like the withs and cords upon Sampson, while he was inspired with the mighty presence and assistance of God's Spirit.

It was possible indeed, that the divine nature

might for awhile suspend its supporting influence, and so deliver over the human nature to pain and death; but it was impossible for it to let go the relation it bore to it. A man may suffer his child to fall to the ground, and yet not wholly quit his hold of him, but still keep it in his power to recover, and lift him up at his pleasure. Thus, the divine nature of Christ did for awhile hide itself from his humanity, but not desert it; put it into the chambers of death, but not lock the everlasting doors upon it. The sun may be clouded and yet not eclipsed; and eclipsed, but not stopped in his course, and much less forced out of his orb. It is a mystery to be admired, that any thing belonging to the person of Christ should suffer; but it is a paradox to be exploded, that it should perish. For, surely, that nature which, diffusing itself throughout the universe, communicates an enlivening influence to every part of it, and quickens the least spire of grass according to the measure of its nature, and the proportion of its capacity, would not wholly leave a nature assumed into its bosom, and, what is more, into the very unity of the divine person, breathless and inanimate, and dismantled of its prime and noblest perfection. For life is so high a perfection of being, that in this respect the least fly or mite is a more noble being than a star. And God has expressly declared himself, 'not the God of the dead, but of the living;' and this in respect of the very persons of men; but how much more with reference to what belongs to the person of his Son? For, when natures come to unite so near, as mutually to interchange names and attributes, and to verify the appellation by which 'God is said to be man,' and 'man to be God;' surely,

man so privileged and advanced, cannot for ever lie under death, without an insufferable invasion upon the entireness of that glorious person, whose perfection is as inviolable as it is incomprehensible.

2. The second ground of the impossibility of Christ's continuance under death, was that great and glorious attribute of God, his immutability. Christ's resurrection was founded upon the same bottom with the consolation and salvation of believers, expressed in that full declaration made by God of himself: 'I, the Lord, change not: therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.'¹ Now, the immutability of God, as it had an influence upon Christ's resurrection, was two-fold.

First, in respect of his decree or purpose.

Secondly, in respect of his word or promise.

And first for his decree. God had from all eternity designed this, and sealed it by an irreversible purpose. For can we imagine that Christ's resurrection was not decreed as well as his death and sufferings? and these are expressly said, 'to have been determined by God.'² It is a known rule in divinity, "that whatsoever God does in time, that he purposed to do from eternity;" for there can be no new purposes in God: since he who takes up a new purpose, does so because he sees some ground to induce him to such a purpose, which he did not see before. But this can have no place in an infinite knowledge, which by one comprehensive intuition sees all things as present, before ever they come to pass. So that there can be no new emergency that can alter the divine resolutions. And,

¹ Malachi, iii. 6.

² Acts, ii. 23.

therefore, it having been absolutely purposed to raise Christ from the dead, his resurrection was as fixed and necessary as the purpose of God was irrevocable : a purpose which commenced from eternity, and was declared in the very beginnings of time ; a purpose not to be changed, nor so much as bent, and much less broke, by all the created powers in heaven and earth, and in hell besides. For though indeed death is a great conqueror, and his bands much too strong for nature and mortality ; yet when over-matched by a decree, this conqueror, as old as he has grown in conquest, must surrender back his spoils, unbind his captives, and in a word even death itself must receive its doom. From all which it is manifest, that where there is a divine decree, there is always an Omnipotence to second it ; and consequently, that by the concurrence of both, no less a power was employed to raise Christ out of the grave, than that which first raised the world itself out of nothing.

2. Let us consider God's immutability in respect of his word and promise, for these also were engaged in this affair. In what a clear prophecy was this foretold, and dictated by that Spirit, which could not lie ! 'Thou shalt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.' And Christ also had frequently foretold the same of himself. Now when God says a thing, he gives his veracity in pawn to see it fully performed. 'Heaven and earth may pass away sooner than one iota of a divine promise fall to the ground. Few things are recorded of Christ, but the rear of the narrative is still brought up with this ; that such a thing was done, 'That it

might be fulfilled what was spoken by such or such a prophet.' Such a firm, unshaken, adamantine connexion is there between a prophecy and its accomplishment. 'All things that are written in the prophets concerning me,' says Christ, 'must come to pass.' And surely then the most illustrious passage that concerned him could not remain under an uncertainty and contingency of event. So that what is most emphatically said concerning the persevering obstinacy and infidelity of the Jews; 'That they could not believe, because,' that Esaias had said, 'that God blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, and so be converted and he should heal them:'—the same, I affirm, may with as great an emphasis, and a much greater clearness to our reason, be affirmed of Christ, that therefore death could not hold him, because the kingly prophet had long before sung the triumphs of his glorious resurrection in the forementioned prediction. In a word, whatsoever God purposes or promises, passes from contingent and merely possible into certain and necessary: and whatsoever is necessary, the contrary of it is so far impossible.

But when I say that the divine decree or promise imprints a necessity upon things, it may, to prevent misapprehension, be needful to explain what kind of necessity this is, that so the liberty of second causes be not thereby wholly cashiered and taken away. For this therefore, we are to observe, that the schools distinguish of a two-fold necessity, physical and logical, or causal and consequential,

¹ John, xii. 39, 40.

which terms are commonly thus explained ; viz. that physical or causal necessity is, when a thing by an efficient, productive influence certainly and naturally causes such an effect : and in this sense, neither the divine decree nor promise makes things necessary ; for neither the decree nor promise, by itself, produces or effects the thing decreed or promised ; nor exerts any active influence upon second causes, so as to impel them to do any thing ; but in point of action are wholly ineffective. Secondly, logical or consequential necessity is, when a thing does not efficiently cause an event, but yet by certain infallible consequence does infer it. Thus the foreknowledge of any event, if it be true and certain, does certainly and necessarily infer, that there must be such an event : forasmuch as the certainty of knowledge depends upon the certainty of the thing known. And in this sense it is, that God's decree and promise give a necessary existence to the thing decreed or promised ; that is to say, they infer it by a necessary infallible consequence : so that it was as impossible for Christ not to rise from the dead, as it was for God absolutely to decree and promise a thing, and yet for that thing not to come to pass.

The third reason of the impossibility of Christ's detention under a state of death, was from the justice of God. God in the whole procedure of Christ's sufferings must be considered as a judge exacting, and Christ as a person paying down a recompense or satisfaction for sin. For though Christ was as pure and undefiled with the least spot of sin as purity and innocence itself : yet he was pleased to make himself the greatest sinner in the world, by imputation, and rendering himself a surety respon-

sible for our debts. For it is said, 'He who knew no sin was made sin for us.'¹ When the justice of God was lifting up the sword of vengeance over our heads, Christ snatched us away from the blow, and substituted his own body in our room, to receive the whole stroke of that dreadful retribution inflicted by the hand of an angry Omnipotence.

But now, as God was pleased so to comport with his justice, as not to put up the injury done it by sin without an equivalent compensation; so this being once paid down, that proceeding was to cease. The punishment due to sin was death, which being paid by Christ, divine justice could not any longer detain him in his grave. For what had this been else but to keep him in prison after the debt was paid? Satisfaction disarms justice, and payment cancels the bond. And that which Christ exhibited was full measure pressed down and running over, even adequate to the nicest proportions, and the most exact demands of that severe and unrelenting attribute of God. So that his release proceeded not upon terms of courtesy, but of claim. The gates of death flew open before him out of duty; and even that justice which was infinite, was yet circumscribed within the inviolable limits of what was due. Otherwise guilt would even grow out of expiation, the reckoning be inflamed by being paid, and punishment itself not appease, but exasperate justice. Revenge, indeed, in the hand of a sinful mortal man, is for the most part, vast, unlimited, and unreasonable; but revenge in the hands of an infinite justice is not so infinite as to be also indefinite, but in all its actings proceeds by rule and determination, and cannot

¹ 2 Cor. v. 21.

possibly surpass the bounds put to it by the merits of the cause, and the measure of the offence. It is not the effect of mere choice and will, but springs out of the unalterable relation of equality between things and actions. In a word, the same justice of God which required him to deliver Christ to death, did afterwards as much engage him to deliver him from it.

4. The fourth ground of the impossibility of Christ's perpetual continuance under death was the necessity of his being believed in as a Saviour, and the impossibility of his being so without rising from the dead. As Christ by his death paid down a satisfaction for sin, so it was necessary that it should be declared to the world by such arguments as might found a rational belief of it; so that man's unbelief should be rendered inexcusable. But how could the world believe that he fully had satisfied for sin, so long as they saw death, the known wages of sin, maintain its full force and power over him, holding him, like an obnoxious person, in durance and captivity? When a man is once imprisoned for debt, none can conclude the debt either paid by him or forgiven to him, but by the release of his person. Who could believe Christ to have been a God and a Saviour while he was hanging upon the tree? A dying, crucified God, a Saviour of the world who could not save himself, would have been exploded by the universal consent of reason as an horrible paradox and absurdity. Had not the resurrection followed the crucifixion, that scoff of the Jews had stood as an unanswerable argument against him, Mark, xv. 31, 'Himself he cannot save;' and in the thirty-second verse, 'Let

him come down from the cross, and we will believe in him.' Otherwise, surely, that which was the lowest instance of human weakness and mortality could be no competent demonstration of a Deity. 'To save is the effect of power, and of such a power as prevails to a complete victory and a triumph. But it is expressly affirmed, 'that Christ was crucified through weakness.'¹ Death was too hard for his humanity, and bore away the spoils of it for a time. So that, while Christ was in the grave, men might as well have expected, that a person hung in chains should come down and head an army, as imagine that a dead body, continuing such, should be able to triumph over sin and death, which so potently triumphs over the living. The discourse of the two disciples going to Emmaus, and expecting no such thing as a resurrection, was upon that supposition hugely rational and significant. 'We trusted,' said they, 'that this had been he who should have redeemed Israel:'² thereby clearly implying that upon his death they had let that confidence fall to the ground together with him. For they could not imagine that a breathless carcass could chase away the Roman eagles, and so recover the kingdom and nation of the Jews, from under their subjection; which was the redemption that even the disciples (till they were further enlightened) promised themselves from their Messiah. But the argument would equally, nay more strongly hold against a spiritual redemption, supposing his continuance under a state of death, as being a thing in itself much more difficult. For how could such an one

¹ 2 Cor. xiii. 4.² Luke, xxiv. 21.

break the kingdom of darkness and set his foot upon 'principalities' and 'powers,' and 'spiritual wickednesses in high places,' who himself fell a sacrifice to the wickedness of mortal men; and remained a captive in the lower parts of the earth, reduced to a condition not only below men's envy, but below their very feet?

5. The fifth, and last ground of the impossibility of Christ's perpetual continuance under a state of death, was the nature of the priesthood, which he had taken upon him. The apostle, Heb. viii. 4, says, 'that if he were upon earth he should not be a priest.' Certainly then much less could he be so, should he continue under the earth. The two great works of his priesthood were to offer sacrifice, and then to make intercession for sinners, correspondent to the two works of the Mosaical priesthood; in which the priest first slew the lamb, and then with the blood of it entered into the holy of holies, there to appear before God in the behalf of the people. Christ therefore, after that he had offered himself upon the cross, was to enter into heaven, and, there presenting himself to the Father, to make that sacrifice effectual to all the intents and purposes of it. Upon which account the apostle, to express his fitness for the priesthood infinitely beyond any of the sons of Aaron, states it upon this, 'that he lives for ever to make intercession for us, and,' upon that very score also, 'is able to save to the uttermost.'¹ But surely the dead could not intercede for the living, nor was the grave a *sanctum sanctorum*. Had not Christ risen again, his blood indeed

¹ Heb. vii. 25.

might have cried for vengeance upon his murderers, but not for mercy upon believers. In short, it had spoken no better things than the blood of Abel, which called for nothing but a fearful judgment upon the head of him who shed it. Christ's death merited a redemption for the world, but Christ while dead could not show forth the full effects of that redemption. He made the purchase at his death, but he could not take possession till he was returned to life. Ever since Christ ascended into heaven, he has been pursuing the great work begun by him upon the cross, and applying the virtue of his sacrifice to those for whom it was offered. It is affirmed by some, and that not without great probability of reason, that the souls of the saints who died before Christ's resurrection did not actually enter into a state of complete glory till Christ, the great Captain of their salvation, upon his ascension first entered into it himself, and then made way for others. So that according to that divine anthem of the church, "after that he had overcome the sharpness of death, then," at length, and not till then, "he opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers." And thus I have given five several reasons, why it was not possible that a state of death should finally prevail over Christ, which was the thing to be proved. And I have nothing further to recommend to your consideration, but only two things, which the very nature of the subject seems of itself to imprint upon all pious minds.

1. The first is a dehortation from sin, and that indeed the strongest that can be. For can we imagine that the second person in the glorious Trinity, would concern himself to take upon him our flesh,

and to suffer, and die, and at length rise again, only to render us the more secure and confident in our sins? Would he neither see, nor endure any corruption, in his dead body, that we should harbour all the filth and corruption imaginable in our immortal souls? Did he conquer and triumph over death, that we should be the slaves and captives of that which is worse than death? Christ has declared that he will dwell in those, whom he assumes into the society of his mystical body. But can we think, that he who passed from a clean, new sepulchre into an heavenly mansion, will descend from thence to take up his habitation in the rotten sepulchre of an heart possessed and polluted with the love of that which he infinitely hates? It will little avail us that Christ rose from a temporal death, unless we also rise from a spiritual. For those who do not imitate as well as believe Christ's resurrection, must expect no benefit by it.

2. Christ's resurrection is an high and sovereign consolation against death. Death we know is the grand enemy of mankind, the merciless tyrant over nature, and the king of terrors. But, blessed be God, Christ has given a mortal blow to his power, and broke his sceptre. And if we, by a through conquest of our sins and rising from them, can be but able to say, 'O sin, where is thy power?' We may very rationally and warrantably, say thereupon, 'O death, where is thy sting?' So that when we come to resign back these frail bodies, these vessels of mortality to the dust from whence they were taken, we may yet say of our souls as Christ did of the damsel whom he raised up, 'that she was not dead, but only slept;' for, in

like manner, we shall as certainly rise out of the grave, and triumph over the dishonours of its rottenness and putrefaction, as we rise in the morning out of our beds, with bodies refreshed and advanced into higher and nobler perfections. For the head being once risen, we may be sure the members cannot stay long behind. And Christ is already risen and gone before, to prepare mansions for all those who belong to him under that high relation, 'that where he is, they (to their eternal comfort) may be also, rejoicing and singing praises and hallelujahs to him who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.'

To whom be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all glory, might, majesty, and dominion, to eternal ages. Amen.

SERMON II.

HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD.

BY DR. ISAAC BARROW.

[ISAAC BARROW was born in 1630. In 1672 he was made master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and died in 1677.]

S E R M O N I I.

ACTS, 1. 3.

To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs; being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. . . .

THE most proper and most usual way of God, in confirming any truth of high moment in special manner revealed by him, is by lending unto them whom he employs as messengers thereof, his powerful arm for the performance of works supernatural or miraculous. Of such works there is none more certainly such than raising a dead person to life; the doing which, upon several accounts, plainly surpasseth the power of any creature; not only as exceeding the ordinary law and course of nature established and upheld by God, but for that the souls of men departing hence do return into God's hand, or into a state by high sentence determined, whence no creature is able to fetch them down, or raise them up; because also God hath reserved the prerogative of doing this unto himself; he 'holding (as it is expressed in the Revelation) the keys of

hell and of death ;' he having said, 'I am he, and there is no God beside me; I kill, and I make alive.'¹

There could also particularly be no more proper way of confirming our religion to come from God, whether we consider the persons whom it was designed for, or the doctrines it propounded. The Jews were incapable of conviction by any other way than by miracle; no other reason would have been apprehended by them, or would have had any force upon them. 'The Jews (saith St. Paul) require a sign;' and, 'except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe,' said our Saviour to them.² The Gentiles also had been so used to the winding off and on the subtleties and the plausibilities of disputation, that nothing probably in that kind would have sufficed to persuade them; and therefore, somewhat miraculous in the highest kind might be needful to convert them: also the most peculiar and eminent doctrines of our religion (such as are, our Lord Jesus being the Messiah, the Son of God and Saviour of the world, the future resurrection, general judgment, and dispensation of rewards, answerable to men's practice in this life) cannot more immediately and directly be assured, than 'by the resurrection from the dead of him, who principally did reveal them.

Wherefore, Almighty God, in confirmation of our religion, did perform this great work in raising Jesus our Lord from the dead; and withal (for the conviction of the world, for rendering our faith reasonable, and our infidelity inexcusable) he did

¹ Apoc. i. 18; Deut. xxxii. 39; 1 Sam. ii. 6; Psalm lxviii. 20.

² 1 Cor. i. 22; John, iv. 48.

take especial care, that the fact should by very sufficient testimony be conveyed unto us; to which purpose he did (as St. Peter said) *προχειροτονεῖν*, predesign, pick out, and appoint a competent number of persons, in all respects capable and fit to assert it: ¹ this is that which St. Luke in our text doth in way of historical narration affirm. And because the truth thereof is in its kind the principal argument, whereby the truth of our religion in gross may be evincēd, we shall, for the confirmation of our faith, against all impressions of this incredulous (and therefore impious) age, endeavour by God's assistance now to declare and maintain it. That Jesus truly died, all the world could testify; no death was ever more solemn or remarkable; nor do any adversaries contest it; that he after that death was by Divine power raised again to life is that which we believe and assert. Now, whoever with reason shall doubt thereof or deny it, must do it, either because of some repugnance in the fact itself, implying that it could not well be done; or from deficiency of the testimony proving it, as to its authors or circumstances; but neither of these exceptions may reasonably be admitted.

As for the fact itself, or the notion of a resurrection in general, there cannot, (admitting that, which as capable of antecedaneous proof, and as acknowledged by all persons owning any religion, may be presupposed, the power and providence of God, together with his chief attributes of wisdom and goodness incomprehensible,) there cannot be any repugnance therein, or any incredibility. For it was neither in its nature impossible to God, nor in

¹ Acts, x. 41.

its design unworthy of him; it contained nothing apparently either beyond the power of God, or presumable to be against his will.

1. To raise a dead man to life, is indeed, we confess and avow, a work surpassing the power of any creature, not assisted by God; but no reason can be assigned, why it should go beyond the Divine power. The doing it doth not involve contradiction, and is therefore an object of power, and at least is achievable by Omnipotence: let the soul be what it will, and in whatever life may be supposed to consist, nothing can hinder that God may reduce the parts of a man into the same state they sometime before were in. And very easily it is conceivable that he, who (according to the general notions and current traditions of mankind) did first inspire the soul of man into his body, may re-infuse it being separated; that he who after death keepeth it in his hand, may thence restore it; who also (according to histories, received in all the principal religions that have been in the world) hath often actually performed it. Pliny, indeed, doth reckon this among instances of things absolutely impossible. 'It is,' saith he, 'a great solace of our imperfect nature, that even God cannot do all things; for neither can he bring death upon himself, if he would, nor bestow eternity on mortals, nor recall the dead to life.'¹ But it is no wonder, that he, who thought the soul quite to perish by death, should conceive the restitution thereof im-

¹ Imperfectæ vero in homine naturæ præcipua solatia sunt, nè Deum quidem posse omnia; nam neque sibi potest mortem consciscere si velit (quod homini dedit optimum in tantis vitæ malis) nec mortales æternitate donare, nec revocare defunctos.—Plin. ii. 7.

possible; although, even supposing that, his opinion was not reasonable; for even any thing, how corruptible soever, by dissolution of its ingredients, or alteration of its temperament, may, by re-collecting and rejoining those ingredients, or By re-establishing the causes of such a temperament, be restored, (as a house whose materials are dispersed may be re-edified, or as a liquor by a new fermentation may be revived,) which to effect may not be deemed hard to him that made the whole world: ¹ however, to such as him we may say as our Saviour did to the Sadducees, ‘Ye err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.’ ² Especially to those who acknowledge the immortality of the soul, or its permanence in a separate state, and who admit the truth of the ancient histories among the Jews, it is not only most evidently possible, but very credible, that God upon any considerable occasion should perform it; with such St. Paul might well thus expostulate: ‘What? doth it seem incredible to you that God should raise the dead?’ ³ to you that have such previous notions and persuasions about God’s omnipotency; (such as the prophet Jeremy expresseth when he saith, ‘Ah, Lord God, behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched-out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee;’) to you who avow God to be the Father of Spirits, who formeth the spirit of man within him, and that when man dieth, his spirit returneth to God who gave it; to you who believe that our souls are spiritual substances, like unto angels, subsisting after death, and destined to future rewards; to you, in fine, who

¹ Jer. xxxii. 17.² Matt. xxii. 29.³ Acts, xxvi. 8.

may, in your holy records, find so many experiments of this power exerted by God in his prophets ;¹ such as that of Elijah's restoring the widow of Sarepta's son ; of Elisha raising the son of the Shunamite ; that of the dead man reviving when his body touched the prophet's bones ; to you, therefore, this fact cannot be in itself incredible ; nor indeed can it, for the reason suggested, to any man reasonably seem impossible.²

2. Nor was it apparently in its design unworthy of God, or inconsistent with his holy will : for the ends thereof (such as were pretended by the attestors of it) were as very great and important, so most good and reasonable ; it aimed at no slight or trifling matter, but such as in appearance highly concerned the glory of God, and conduced to the welfare of mankind, it professing itself to be a credential of the greatest embassy that ever came down from heaven to men, importing the complete revelation of God's will, and procurement of salvation to the world ; and did therefore, in that respect, well become the wisdom and goodness of God to use it. It pretended to confirm a doctrine containing most true and worthy representations of God, the best that could be ; declaring most gracious intentions in God of mercy and kindness toward men ; no less proper for him than grateful and needful for us ; prescribing most excellent rules and patterns of life, (wherein the most genuine piety and virtue, most exact justice and hearty charity, most strict purity and sobriety are prescribed,) yielding the

¹ Jer. xxxii. 17 ; Zech. viii. 6 ; Job. xlii. 2 ; Heb. xii. 9 ; Numb. xvi. 22 ; Ibid. xxvii. 16 ; Zech. xii. 1 ; Isaiah, xlviii. 16 ; Eccles. xii. 1.

² 1 Kings, xvii. 21 ; 2 Kings, iv. 35, xiii. 21.

most effectual helps to the practice of all goodness, and tendering the best encouragement thereto; and upon this account therefore also most worthy of God. So that indeed God could not be conceived to perform such a miracle to better purpose, than for promoting the designs it pretendeth, being so very great, and so very good: it could not be improper for the Divine power to be thus exerted in favour of a religion so apt to promote his glory, and to procure our benefit.

If it be said, that it is absurd or improbable, that God should choose to perform this miracle upon a person of this sort; one so mean and obscure in the state of his life, so wretched and infamous for the manner of his death; that God rather should have chosen, for the interpreter of his mind and minister of his purposes, a personage more illustrious in rank, and clear in repute; I answer, first, that our shallow fancy is a bad and incompetent judge of what is reasonable or absurd, convenient or unfit in such cases, touching the counsels of God; who seeth not as man seeth; whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor ways as our ways; whose folly is wiser than men;¹ (that is, whose counsels, however seeming strange to our dim apprehensions, do yet far excel the results of our best wisdom;) before whom, whatever is high among men is abominable; with whom the wisdom of this world is folly; whose judgments are unsearchable, and his ways are past finding out; as the holy Scriptures teach us;² and as good reason, considering the vast distance between God and us, must acknowledge:

¹ 1 Sam. xvi. 7; Is. lv. 8; xl. 13; 1 Cor. i. 25.

² Luke xvi. 15; 1 Cor. v. 13; Rom. xi. 33; Ps. xcii. 5; xxxvi. 7. Job. xi. 7.

so that no such appearance of incongruity can bottom a good exception against this, or any such matter; otherwise well attested. I say, further, that God's choice herein, being weighed by a pure and well-disposed mind, will appear upon many accounts full of admirable reason and wisdom; all the Divine economy concerning our Lord, being rightly apprehended, will soon appear 'wisdom to the perfect,' and will 'be justified by the children of wisdom;' as that wherein God's transcendent goodness, and perfect justice, and glorious power are with greatest advantage displayed; whereby the hearts of men are most sweetly comforted under their sense of sin, and fear of misery; their minds are most clearly instructed in the ways of duty and happiness, their affections are most strongly excited and encouraged to the practice of all goodness:¹ to such purposes, (for causes, which were it now seasonable, we could produce,) our Saviour's low condition and hard circumstances did admirably serve; and therefore upon that score it could not be unlikely, that God should raise him from the dead.

3. But neither (which is the most considerable point) is the testimony asserting this fact anywise defective or insufficient, but hath all the conditions imaginably requisite to the most entire assurance of any such matter. The defect in the testimony, if any be, must arise from weakness or from wilfulness in the witnesses, (their want of knowledge, or mistake, their want of honesty, or their unfaithfulness,) or from some circumstances belonging to their persons or their testimony, able to invalidate

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 6, 7, 14; Matt. xi. 19.

their attestation ; but none of these things can with reason be supposed ; they were in all respects more than competently qualified to attest, and all considerable circumstances do assist in confirming their attestation, as by weighing the considerations following may appear.

1. As for their number, it was not one or two persons, (although one or two ordinarily do suffice for decision of the greatest cases among men,) but many who conspired in asserting it. 'He was (saith St. Paul, one who was conversant with these witnesses, who, of a zealous adversary and fierce persecutor of this testimony, did become an earnest avoucher thereof) seen of Cephas, then of the twelve, after he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present.'¹ And 'this Jesus (say the twelve apostles) hath God raised up, whereof all we are witnesses.' Twelve there were who principally were designed, and did take it for their especial duty to attest this matter ; besides many others, who in their order were able and ready to do it.'²

2. These witnesses were no strangers to Jesus, but persons by long conversation most familiarly acquainted with him ; who had (as it is said, and as it was notorious) been with him from the beginning, who went out and in with him all the time (that is, for three years' space) from his baptism to his ascension.³

3. They did aver themselves to be eye or ear-witnesses of the matter, as fully informed about it as senses could make them :⁴ 'We cannot but speak

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 5, 6.

² Acts, ii. 14, 32 ; v. 32 ; i. 22 ; x. 39.

³ John, xv. 27 ; Acts, i. 21, 22. ⁴ Luke, i. 2.

what we have heard and seen.'¹ 'What we did see with our eyes, and what our hands did handle of the word of life, that we report unto you;' so St. John (the beloved disciple, who constantly attended on his dear Master) expresseth his testimony. And, 'We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty;' so St. Peter affirmeth concerning the manner of their testifying these matters. They did, I say, hear and see him, and that with all advantage possible or needful, not once or twice, not in passing or at distance, not in way of glimpse or rumour; but often, for a good time, thoroughly; many days conversing and interchanging discourses with him; 'who (as St. Peter in the name of the rest saith) did eat and drink with him after that he rose from the dead.'⁴ And, 'to whom (as St. Luke, their companion, from their mouth, in our text saith) also he showed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God;'⁵ and 'He was (saith St. Paul, another familiar of theirs) seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses to the people.'⁶ And two of these witnesses (St. John and St. Matthew) are in writings extant relaters of passages occurring in their conversation with him, very many, very sensible as can be.

4. We may also consider that the chief of these witnesses, the apostles themselves, were at first (as

¹ Acts, iv. 20.

² 1 John, i. 1.

³ 2 Pet. i. 16.

⁴ Acts, x. 41.

⁵ Ib. i. 3.

⁶ Ib. xiii. 31.

St. Luke of them and from them confesseth) so far from being easy or credulous in regard to this matter, that hearing it from others, who before had seen our Lord risen, they took it for a trifle or a fiction; and gave no credence thereto: 'their words (saith the text) did seem to them (a toy or) an idle tale, and they believed them not.'¹ Yea, some of them would hardly confide in their own eyes, nor would yield assent unto the fact appearing to them, until by letting them touch him, and showing them the marks of his crucifixion remaining on his body, he demonstrated himself to be the very same person who had lived with them and died before them: 'They were terrified and affrighted, and supposed they had seen a spirit'—'And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered,' &c. are words in the history.²

5. Upon these grounds, as they professed, they did, without any mincing, hesitancy, or reservation, in the most full, clear, downright, and peremptory manner, with firm confidence and alacrity concurrently aver the fact: 'They spake the word of God with boldness—and with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.'³

Which things being weighed, it will appear impossible, that the attesters of this fact (supposing them in their wits and senses; and certainly they were so, as presently we shall show, and as the thing itself plainly speaks) could not be ignorant therein, or mistaken about it. For if all the senses of so many persons in a matter so grossly sensible, so often

¹ Luke, xxiv. 11; Matt. xxviii. 17.

² Luke, xxiv. 37, 41; John, xx. 27.

³ Act. iv. 31, 33, xiv. 3.

and for such a continuance of time, can be distrusted ; if the apostles could imagine they saw their friend and master, whom they so long had waited upon, when they did not see him ; that they heard him making long discourses with them, when they did not hear him ; that they did walk, eat and drink with him, did touch, and feel him when there was really no such thing, what assurance can we have of any thing most sensible ? what testimony can be of any validity or use ? on that hand, therefore, the testimony is impregnable : the witnesses cannot be accounted ignorant, or mistaken in the case ; for number, or for ability they cannot be excepted against.

It must be therefore only their seriousness, honesty, or fidelity, that remains questionable in them : they must be said to have wilfully deceived and imposed upon the world ; self-condemned hypocrites, impudent liars and egregious impostors they must have been, if their testimony was false ; but that they were not such persons, that they could not, and would not do so, there are inducements to believe, as forcible as can be required, or well imagined in any such case.

I. They were persons, who did (with denunciation of most heavy judgments from God on the contrary practices) preach and press constantly and earnestly all kinds of goodness, veracity, and sincerity, together with humility, modesty, ingenuity, and equity, as main points of that religion, which they by this testimony confirmed. All their discourses plainly breathed a most serious and sprightly goodness and charity toward men, very inconsistent with a base plot to delude them ; their doctrine utterly condemned all malice, all falsehood,

craft, and hypocrisy, detruding into the bottomless pit all 'that love or make a lie:' consider these sayings and rules of theirs: 'As we have opportunity let us do good unto all men: let your moderation (or equity) be known to all men: show all meekness to all men: laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and evil speakings, as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. Putting aside all lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour. Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds. Brethren, be not children in understanding; however in malice be ye children; but in understanding be perfect men:' such were their precepts discountenancing all malice, and all fraud; propounded in a manner as serious and grave and simple as can be imagined; all the tenor of their doctrine consenting to them: wherein also they earnestly declare against and prohibit all vanity of mind, and perverseness of humour, all affectations of novelty and singularity, all peevish factiousness and turbulency, all fond credulity, stupidity, and precipitancy, all instability and giddiness of mind, all such qualities which dispose men, without most sure and evident grounds, either to introduce or to embrace any new conceits, practices, or stories: such was their discourse, nowise sounding like the language of impostors:—deceit could hardly so disguise or so thwart and supplant itself.

2. Their practice was answerable to their doctrine, exemplary in all sorts of virtue, goodness, and sincerity; such indeed whereby they did in effect

¹ Apoc. xxii. 15, xxi. 27; Gal. vi. 10; Phil. iv. 5; Tit. iii. 2; 1 Pet. ii. 1; Eph. iv. 15, 25; Colos. iii. 9; 1 Cor. xiv. 20; Tit. ii. 7, 8.

conciliate much respect and authority to their words. 'Ye are witnesses (they could, appealing to the observers of their demeanour, and to the all-knowing God, say,) and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe.'¹ And, 'We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.'² Such a lively sense of goodness shining forth in a long course of practice; so to bridle appetites, so to moderate passions, so to eschew all the allurements of pleasure, profit, and honour, to bear adversities so calmly and sweetly, to express so much tender kindness and meekness towards all men, to be continually employed in heavenly discourses and pious works, exhorting men by word, leading them by example to all sorts of goodness indisputably such; to live thus, long and constantly, doth nowise suit unto persons utterly debauched in mind, and of a profligate conscience; who had devised, and did then earnestly drive on the propagation of a vile cheat; the life, I say, they led, was not the life of wicked impostors, but worthy of the divinest men; fit to countenance and carry on the best design, such as they pretended theirs to be.

3. Further, they were persons of good sense; yea very wise and prudent; not in way of worldly or fleshly wisdom, and skill to contrive or compass projects of gain, honour, or pleasure to themselves, to the commendation of them and of their testi-

¹ 1 Thess. ii. 10.

² 2 Cor. iv. 2, 6; ii. 17; Phil. iii. 17.

mony ; they disclaimed being wise or skilful that way ; having no practice therein nor caring for it, (for they looked not much on things temporal and transitory ; they did not mind earthly things ; they had not their conversation, or interest here, but above, as citizens of another world, deeming themselves as but sojourners and pilgrims here,¹) but endued they were with a wisdom as in itself far more excellent, so more suitable to the persons they sustained ; with great perspicuity, and sound judgment in the matters they discoursed about, and in the affairs they pursued : such their writings, according to acknowledgment of innumerable most wise and learned persons, fraught with admirable wisdom and heavenly philosophy (rude indeed, and simple in expression, but most exact and profound in sense) do manifest them to have been ;² such the tenour of their doctrine evidenced them, shining with that lustre and beauty, compacted with that strength and harmony, that whoever will not confess it to have proceeded from God, must, upon consideration, however allow, that it could not have been devised by idiots or mean persons, but did come from persons of much subtlety and great reach. They must be no fools who could frame a religion merely by its own plausibility, without any external help, able presently to supplant all the religions in the world, and to stand durably firm upon the foundations laid by them. Such also the notable conduct of their great affair, (notwithstanding so mighty disadvantages and difficulties,) together with the prodigious efficacy their

¹ 1 Cor. i. 20, ii. 5, 6 ; 2 Cor. i. 12, xi. 6 ; 2 Cor. iv. 18 ; Col. iii. 2 ; Phil. iii. 20 ; 1 Pet. ii. 11.

² 2 Cor. xi. 6 ; 1 Cor. ii. 1, 13.

endeavours had upon men, do evince them to have been. They surely could not be weak men, who in a plain and peaceable way confounded all the wit and policy, all the learning and eloquence, all the force and violence that withstood them.¹ Experience did attest to the truth of what St. Paul saith ; 'The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations and every thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.'²

4. So were they qualified in their minds. It must be further also considered as to their purposes in this case, that in falsely venting and urging this testimony, they could not have any design, gainful or beneficial to themselves ; but must therein to no end be mischievous to themselves and others ; abusing others, indeed, but far more harming themselves ; they must be supposed voluntarily to have embraced all sorts of inconvenience, and designedly to have rendered themselves miserable ; courting adversity, choosing naked and barren evil for its own sake ;³ 'For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile : for neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness : neither of men sought we glory.'⁴ Profit, honour, or pleasure, (those baits which entice men to do evil, and set them upon wicked attempts,) or any worldly advantage thence to accrue to themselves, they could have no design upon ; for all those

¹ Chrys. in 1 Cor. v. Or. elegantissimè.

² Acts, vi. 10 ; 1 Cor. i. 27 ; 2 Cor. x. 4.

³ Vid. Chrys. ib.

⁴ 1 Thes. ii. 3, 5.

things wittingly and willingly they did abandon ; for the sake of this very testimony incurring extremities of loss, of disgrace, and of pain : they did plainly foresee what entertainment their testimony would find, and how in prosecution thereof they should be forced to endure all kinds of indignity, of damage, and of hardship from men ; that ‘ in this world they should have tribulation ;’ that ‘ men should deliver them up to be afflicted, and should kill them ;’ and that they should ‘ be hated of all nations for his name sake :’ their Master expressly had forewarned them, that ‘ all who would live godlily in Christ Jesus (that is, all professors of faith in him, especially the teachers thereof) must suffer persecution ;’ and ‘ must through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God ;’ that ‘ bonds and imprisonments did abide them in every place ;’ that ‘ God had set forth the apostles as appointed unto death,’ and exposed them as spectacles of scorn and obloquy to the world ; that they were ‘ called to suffering, and appointed to this very thing, as to their office, and their portion ;’¹ these were the rules and measures they went by ; these the expectations they had from the world : according unto which it did in effect happen to them : ‘ Even to this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and have no certain dwelling-place ; and labour, working with our hands ; being reviled we bless, being persecuted, we suffer it ; being defamed we intreat : we are made as the filth of the world, and as

¹ John, xvi. 33, xv. 20, xvi. ii ; Matt. xxiv. 9 ; Luke, xxi. 12 ; 2 Tim. iii. 12 ; Acts, xiv. 22 ; Acts, xx. 23 ; 1 Cor. iv. 9 ; 1 Pet. ii. 21 ; 1 Thes. iii. 3.

the off-scouring of all things unto this day :’ so doth St. Paul describe the apostles’ condition.¹

5. All these afflictions, as they knowingly did object themselves to for the sake of this testimony, so they did endure them with contentedness² and joy ; when they had been beaten, ‘ they departed rejoicing, that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus ; rejoicing that they were made partakers of Christ’s sufferings ;’ deeming it a privilege that ‘ was given them, not only to believe in him, but to suffer for his name ;’ thinking themselves ‘ happy in being reproached for the name of Christ ; taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods, counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ their Lord, for whom they suffered the loss of all things.’³

6. Whence it is evident enough, that the satisfaction of their conscience, and expectation of future reward from God for the discharge of their duty herein, was all the argument which did induce them to undertake this attestation, all the reason that could support them in it ; neither of which could be consistent with the resolved maintenance of such a falsehood. They could not indeed but grievously be tormented with remorse in their minds, they could not but dread severe vengeance from heaven, had they been conscious to themselves of so villanous a design of mocking God, (whose name and express command they pre-

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 11 ; 2 Cor. iv. 8.

² Acts, v. 41 ; 1 Peter, iv. 13 ; Phil. i. 29 ; 1 Peter, iv. 14 ; Heb. x. 34 ; Phil. iii. 9 ; 1 Peter, i. 6 ; Rom. v. iii ; James, i. 2.

tended, whose testimony and judgment they appealed to in this affair,) and, together, of abusing the world with such an imposture.¹ Such must have been their inward sense, and such their expectations, had they proceeded with guilty conscience in this business; but they do seriously profess otherwise, and the condition of things might assure us they were in good earnest: ‘For this end (saith St. Paul) we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe. And our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world:’ and, ‘knowing the fear of the Lord, (that is, being sensible of our duty toward God, and fearful of his judgment, if we transgress it,) we persuade men; but are made manifest unto God;’² so they declare what principle it was that moved them to this practice, and the hope encouraging them in it they often express: ‘If (said they) we suffer with Christ, we shall be glorified together with him.’ And, ‘We always bear about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body.’ And, ‘It is a faithful saying, if we are dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us.’ And, ‘I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the

¹ Acts, iv. 19, v. 29; 2 Cor. ii. 17, iv. 2; 1 Cor. ix. 16.*

* 1 Tim. iv. 10; 2 Cor. i. 12; 1 Cor. v. 11.

righteous judge shall give me at that day.'¹ So they profess concerning the grounds and reasons of their maintaining this testimony (and the points connected therewith) with so great present inconvenience to themselves: and the state of things rendereth their profession most credible; for they appear not so blind as not to see those inconveniences, nor so fond as to like them for themselves, or upon no considerable account: they confess, that they should be very stupid and senseless people, if they had incurred and underwent all this to no purpose, or without hope of good recompense for it after this life. 'If Christ be not risen (saith St. Paul) then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain; yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, that he raised up Christ:—then we have only hope in this life,' and 'if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.'²

7. And how, indeed, is it conceivable, that such persons should be so bewitched with so passionate an affection, or so mighty a respect toward a poor dead man, (one who was born so obscurely, who lived so poorly, who died so miserably and infamously, as a malefactor; who indeed so died to their knowledge most deservedly, supposing they did know their testimony to be false; one who never was capable of obliging them, or recompensing them for their actings or sufferings in any valuable measure,) that merely for his sake, or rather not for his sake, but only for a smoke of vain opinion about him, (which could nowise profit either him

¹ Rom. viii. 17; 2 Cor. iv. 10; 2 Tim. ii. 11; 1 Pet. i. 7, iv. 13; 2 Tim. iv. 8.

² 1 Cor. xv. 14, 15, 19, 30, 31.

or them) they should, with an inflexible obstinacy, defy all the world; expose themselves to all the persecutions of the world, and to all the damnations of hell. St. Paul surely had another opinion of Jesus, when he said, 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us; for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord:'¹ could they, think we, speak thus who knew Jesus to be a wicked deceiver, worthily hated of God and men? No assuredly, their speech and behaviour do palpably show that therefore they did bear so vehement an affection, and so high a respect toward Jesus, because as with their mouths they openly professed, so they were in their hearts thoroughly persuaded that he was the Son of God, most dear unto him; who died for their sake, who was to their knowledge raised again; who also, according to his promises, would recompense their faithful adherence to him with eternal joy and bliss.

8. Again, we may consider these witnesses to have of themselves been persons very unlikely to devise such a plot, very unfit to undertake it, very unable to manage and carry it through.² Persons they were of no reputation for birth, for wealth

¹ Rom. viii. 35. &c.

² Vid. Chrys. tom. vi. Orat. vi. p. 61.

for any worldly interest; persons of no education, no improvement, no endowments of mind (natural or artificial) anywise considerable:¹ they were, as to condition and manner of life, fishermen, publicans, and mechanics; as to abilities of mind, they were (as they report themselves) illiterate and simple;² they were also men of no great natural spirit or courage, but rather irresolute and timorous; as their deserting their Master, their renouncing him, their flying and skulking, reported by themselves, declare:³ the base or ignoble, the despicable or abject, the weak, the 'foolish things of the world,' they did style themselves;⁴ and in that no adversary will, I suppose, contradict them. And is it possible, that a few (in this respect, I mean very few) persons thus conditioned and qualified, should have the wit to contrive, or the courage to maintain a forgery of such importance? What hope they could frame to themselves of any success therein, upon so extreme disadvantages, is to any man very obvious.⁵ No kind of friends in all the world could they imagine ready to back them, or yield them any encouragement; but heaven, hell, and earth they had reason to expect all to be combined in opposition to them and their design. They had all reason to fear, that God himself would cross them and blast their wicked endeavours to propagate the belief of such a lie, which most profanely they dared to father on him, and to vent in his name. They could not hope the father of lies himself, or any powers of darkness would be fa-

¹ Chrys. tom. v.² Acts, iv. 13.³ Matt. xxvi. 56; John, xx. 19; 1 Cor. i. 27, 28.⁴ Cor. iv. 7.⁵ Chrys. tom. v. Orat. lxiv. in Babylam.

vourable or helpful to them, whose interest they so manifestly impugned, that the success of their doctrine, whether true or false, could not but much prejudice their kingdom; as in effect we see that it did in a manner quite subvert it. They were sure among men to encounter the most potent, and most earnest adversaries that could be: all the grandees of the world, both political and religious, deeply concerned in honour and interest to labour with all their power, the detection of their cheat, and overthrow of their design. Whence it must be a boldness more than human, more than gigantic, that could bear up against all these adversaries; if their testimony was in their conscience false. Against all these oppositions and disadvantages, what could those poor men have to confide in, beside the natural prevalence of truth, and divine assistance thereto; being in their hearts assured of the former, and therefore greatly hoping for the latter?

9. And how indeed could such a cheat, contrived and conducted by so, to human esteem, weak and silly a knot of people, so easily prosper, and obtain so wonderful a progress, so as presently to induce very many persons, ('myriads of believers,' as it is in Acts, xxi. 20,) many of them considerable, (even 'a great crowd or company of priests,' as it is said in the Acts,¹) to embrace it, together with all the crosses and damages attending it?—so as to escape all inquisition about it, and overbear all persecution against it, being neither convincible by proof, nor controllable by force; but in despite of all assaults holding its ground, and run-

¹ Acts, vi. 7.

ning forward with huge success; according to that in the Acts: 'so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.'¹

10. The matter of their testimony (if we consider that as we should do) and its drift were very implausible, such as no impostors would be likely to forge, and no hearers, without great evidence of truth, would be ready to admit. It was no fine story apt to please the lusts, to flatter the humours, or to gratify the fancies of men;² but rather very distasteful to flesh and blood, (whose inclinations it mainly thwarted,) likely to offend the ears of all men, who should hear it; apt to raise fierce anger and indignation in Jews, great contempt and scorn in Gentiles toward it.³ The Jews, to whom it was first addressed, it did plainly charge with heinous iniquity and impiety in cruelly murdering a person most innocent, most excellent in virtue and dignity, most dear to God; it withal defeated their longings for a gaudy Messiah, who should restore and rear them into a lofty state of temporal prosperity, substituting in the room a spiritual King, with overtures of felicity invisible and future, little suiting their gross conceit and carnal gust of things; it also imported the abrogation of those ritual laws, and revolution of those special privileges wherein they did so please and pride themselves; it opened the enclosures of God's favour and grace, making

¹ 2 Thess. iii. 1; Acts, xix. 20; vi. 7; xii. 24. *κατα κράτος ἐξῆλθε*, grew by main force.

² Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. v.

³ Si rem credibilem crediderunt, videant quàm sint stolidi qui non credunt. Si autem res incredibilis credita est, etiam hoc utique incredibile est, sic creditum esse quod incredibile est, &c. Aug. de Civ. D. xxii. 5. Vid. Chrys. tom. vi. Orat. lxi.

them common to all people :¹ it crossed their secular interests of emolument and honour annexed to the present outward frame of religion, which it dissolved ; it menaced severe vengeance and horrible desolation to their nation and city : and was such a report likely to be entertained by them otherwise than with displeasure and detestation ? Neither unto the Gentiles was it likely to be acceptable ; for it did also subvert all the religion established among them by law and custom ; destroying consequently all the interests of those who were concerned in upholding thereof ; such as those who made that famous uproar, crying out, ' Great is Diana of the Ephesians.'² It seemed to thwart the common maxims of policy, and dictates of worldly prudence ; it could not but appear to men prepossessed with admiration of secular wealth, power, and glory, a story most ridiculously extravagant, that so pitiful and wretched a person, as Jesus seemed in the eye of the world to have been, should in this miraculous way be declared the Son of God, and Lord of all things, author of life and salvation to all men ; sovereign object of all worship and obedience : such a story therefore it was not likely that any men in their senses should conspire to forge, should offer to obtrude on the world, so incapable of it, so averse from embracing it ; and being such it were strange that by a general repulse it should not presently be stifled and quelled.

One would indeed think that this report, had it been false, might easily have been disproved and quashed. They who were mightily concerned, and as eagerly disposed to confute it, wanted no means

¹ Vid. Acts, xxii. 21, 22.

² Ib. xix. 28, 34.

of doing it :¹ they were not surprised in the matter ; but were forewarned of it, and did forbode it coming : they were not drowsy, or neglectful, but very apprehensive, careful and cautious in preventing it ; that it should not be produced, or being so, that it might be defeated ; for to this purpose they caused the sepulchre of our Lord to be sealed up and guarded by soldiers, that, being masters of his body, they might by exhibiting it disprove any report that should be made about his resurrection :² they had full opportunity of examining the matter to the bottom ; it being fresh and presently divulged after its being reported done : they having also the power and authority on their side, in furtherance of the discussion of the business, we may accordingly suppose them very zealous, diligent, and active in thoroughly sifting it, and striving to detect the falsehood therein ; they did so certainly, and thereto they added strict prohibitions, fierce menaces, and bloody persecutions toward the suppression thereof ;³ yet could they not by all their industry confute it, nor by all their fury quell it. Why ? Because it was not confutable ; because truth prosecuted with vigorous integrity and constancy, or rather supported by divine protection and blessing, is invincible. Put the case, there were now the like fact by so many people reported done within these two months, wherein the church and state were in like manner exceedingly concerned, and should therefore employ all their power and care to discover the truth ; one would think it impossible, that were it an imposture it should escape detection, and being soon, with the general satisfac-

¹ Acts, v. 28. ² Matt. xxvii. 64. ³ Acts, iv. 17 ; xviii. 5, 28.

tion of men, quite blown away and exploded : this is the fate of all falsehood, standing merely upon its own legs, and not propped by worldly power ; but truth, as in the present case, is able to subsist by its own strength, especially heaven being concerned to aid it.

12. As also, this testimony had no power to sustain it, so it used no sleight to convey itself into the persuasions of men : it did not creep in dark corners, it did not grow, by clandestine whispers ; it craved no blind faith of men ; but with a barefaced confidence it openly proclaimed itself, appealing to the common sense of men, and provoking the world to examine it ; daring all adversaries here to confront it, defying all the powers beneath to withstand it ; claiming only the patronage of heaven to maintain it.¹

13. Furthermore, the thing itself, had it been counterfeit, was in all probability apt to fall of itself ; the witnesses clashing together, or relenting for their crime. That advice of Gamaliel had much reason in it : ‘ Refrain,’ said he, ‘ from those men, and let them alone, for if this council, or this work be of men, it will come to nought ;’² καταλυθήσεται. it will of itself be dissolved or destroyed : for how, indeed, could it be, that among so many confederates in a juggle, not one, either checked by conscience, or daunted by hazards, or wearied and worn out by sufferings, should flinch and fall off, so as to detect the plot, disavow his fault, and retire from persecution ; but that each one should persist steadfast in so high a strain of vile dissimula-

¹ 1 Thes. v. 21.

² Acts, v. 38.

tion? If one had fallen off, he had certainly spoiled all the plot, opened all men's eyes, and prevented the faith of any one person to the story: and what cement could firmly combine such a pack of men to God, and to all the world, that they should continue invincibly stiff in their faith to one another, and constantly true to so vain a design, good to no man, worst to themselves? That, I say, twelve such persons, every one for a long time, during their whole life, should persevere immovable in so extravagant a resolution of lying, so as by no regrets or dissatisfactions from within, no threats, no perils, no troubles, or pains from without, to be ever driven out of it, but should die with it in their mouths, yea, rejoice and glory in dying for it; should dying carry it into the presence of God, and dare with it to appear at his judgment, is exceedingly strange and incredible. It must, therefore, surely be truth alone that could set them on this design, and could uphold them steady in it; so unanimous a consent, so clear a confidence, so firm a resolution, so insuperable a constancy and patience, nothing but a sense of truth could inspire men with, nothing but a perfectly good conscience could sustain. Possibly it is, that in matters of speculation and subtlety men upon slender grounds may be peremptorily opinionative, and desperately pertinacious; (this experience sheweth;) but in a matter of this nature (a matter of plain fact and gross sense) none can well be imagined (none especially so qualified, in such circumstances, to such purposes can be imagined) to be so wretchedly stupid, or desperately obstinate.

14. He, then, who doubts of the sincerity of these witnesses, or rejects their testimony as incredible,

must, instead of it, admit of divers stranger incredibilities; refusing his faith to one fact, devious from the natural course of things, but very feasible to God; he must thence allow it to many others, repugnant to the nature of man, and to the course of human things; performed without God, yea, against him.¹ Is it credible that persons otherwise through all their lives strictly blameless, and rigidly virtuous, (even in the more heavenly parts of goodness, in humanity, meekness, peaceableness, humility, and patience,) should, against clearest dictates of conscience, peremptorily and perseveringly commit so palpable villany, as to broach and propagate such an imposture; that they, all whose demeanours and discourses evidently did tend to the advancement of God's glory, and promoting goodness, should so in their hearts utterly defy God, and detest goodness; or that persons in a strain incomparably solemn and serious should so plainly teach, so strongly press, so otherwise uniformly practise highest good will and beneficence toward all men, while they were with all their mind and might striving to gull and abuse men? Is it conceivable, that men, otherwise in all their actions so wise and well advised, (able to manage and to perform so great matters,) should so zealously drive on a most vain and senseless project, with more unwearied industry labouring to maintain and disperse a lie, than any men beside did ever strive in behalf of truth? Is it not marvellous that men in all respects so impotent, without any arms or aids, should adventure on so high an enterprize, should with so happy success achieve it; that naked

¹ Aug. de Civ. D. xxii. 5.

weakness should boldly assault, and thoroughly overpower the greatest might; pure simplicity should contest with and baffle sharpest wit, subtlest policy, and deepest learning; that rude speech (void of strength or ornament) should effectually persuade an uncouth and unpleasant tale against all the finest and strongest rhetoric in the world? Is it not strange that a crew of vile and base persons should so inseparably be linked together with no other bands than deceit and dishonesty; no truth, no virtue, no common interest helping to combine, or contain them together? Is it to be believed that men of sense should, gratis, for no considerable end or advantage, voluntarily embrace and patiently endure all that is distasteful to human nature, freely exposing themselves they knew not why, only for the sake of a story, to the fury of earth and flames of hell; eagerly sacrificing their fortunes, credits, lives, and souls themselves to the ghost of a forlorn wretch and infamous caitif? Is it not in fine prodigious, that so implausible a falsehood, upon all greatest disadvantages, should encounter, vanquish, and triumph over truth? These are incredibilities indeed, able to choke any man's faith; yet, he that rejects this testimony must swallow and digest them, together with other like them of as hard concoction.

15. To these things we may add, that God himself did signally countenance, and ratify this testimony; not only by conferring on the avowers thereof extraordinary graces, (invincible courage, irresistible wisdom, indefatigable industry, inflexible constancy and patience; admirable self-denial, meekness, charity, temperance, and all virtues in an eminent degree,) not only further by a wonder-

ful success and blessing bestowed upon their endeavours; but by enduing them with supernatural gifts, and enabling them to perform miraculous works openly and frequently; ‘so that by the hands of the apostles many wonders, and signs were done among the people—the Lord giving testimony unto the word of his grace, and granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands; so that with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all:’¹ (that is, there was a great appearance of the divine favour toward them, and of the divine operation in and by them.) Yielding which kind of attestation was the ancient and usual method of God in authorizing his messengers, and approving the declaration of his mind by them; (the seal as it were put to the letters credential from heaven;) nor could God afford more convincing signs than these of his approbation to any person or design: that God did thus *συνεπιμαρτυρεῖν*, ‘attest (as the apostle to the Hebrews speaketh) together with these witnesses,’² if the apostolical history (bearing in it all the characters of a simple, faithful, and upright narration,) did not relate it; yet the effect of this testimony, so speedily and easily prevailing every where, would render it highly probable, since, in likelihood, no human endeavour, without divine assistance, could accomplish a business so great and difficult: if they did no miracles, *τὸ μέγιστον σημεῖον*, this (as St Chrysostom says,) ‘was the greatest miracle that

¹ Acts, ii. 43, v. 12; xiv. 3, xix. 11; iv. 33.

² Heb. ii. 4.

could be,' that such a testimony should without any miracle prevail.'

16. Now, for conclusion, all these things being considered, it is sufficiently apparent, that this testimony is above all exception; that no matter of fact ever had, or well could have in any considerable respect, a more valid and certain proof. The greatest affairs in the world (concerning the rights and reputations, the estates and the lives of men,) are decided by testimonies in all regards less weighty; so that to refuse it, is in effect to decline all proof by testimony, to renounce all certainty in human affairs, to remove the grounds of proceeding securely in any business, or administration of justice; to impeach all history of fabulousness, to charge all mankind with insufficiency, or extreme infidelity, (for, if these persons were not able, or not honest enough, what men can ever be supposed such; who can by greater arguments assure their ability, or their integrity in reporting any thing?) to thrust God himself away from bearing credible attestation in any case: (for, in what case did he ever or can he be conceived to yield an attestation more full or plain, than he did in this? What further can he perform needful to convince men endued with any competency of reason and ingenuity, or to distinguish them from men of contrary disposition, unreasonably and unworthily incredulous?) in fine, to distrust this testimony, is therefore in effect, to embrace the vanity of the most wanton or wicked sceptic.

¹ Chrys. in Act. i. 3. Vide in 1 Cor. Or. 5. Si per apostolos —ista miracula facta esse non credunt, hoc nobis unum grande miraculum est, quod ea terrarum orbis sine ullis miraculis credit. —Aug. de Civ. D. xxii. 5.

The use of all is in short this, that we should heartily thank God for so clear and strong an assurance of the truth of our faith; that we therefore firmly embrace it, and steadily persevere therein;¹ that we obey it, and bear fruits worthy thereof in our practice; that so doing we may obtain the blissful rewards which upon those terms it propoundeth and promiseth; that we may all so do, God of his mercy grant, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom for ever be all glory and praise.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom, be glory for ever and ever.—*Amen.*²

¹ Heb. x. 23; iv. 14.

² Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

SERMON III.

THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN, &c.

BY DR. ISAAC BARROW.

S E R M O N I I I .

LUKE, XXIV. 46.

And he said unto them, thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.

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THE words of men leaving this world (as proceeding from a depth of serious concernedness, and influenced by a special providence) are usually attended with great regard, and a kind of veneration; these are such, even the words of our departing Lord; the which therefore deserve and demand our best consideration.

They respect two points of grand importance, the passion and the resurrection of our Lord; of which I shall only now consider the latter, as being most agreeable to the present season: and whereas there be divers particulars observable in them, I shall confine my discourse to one, being the main point; couched in those words, ‘thus it behoved; which import the needfulness, and expediency of our Lord’s resurrection: of which I shall endeavour, first, to declare the truth, and then to show the usefulness, by a practical application thereof.

The resurrection of our Lord may appear to have been needful and expedient, upon several good accounts.

1. It was needful to illustrate the veracity, wisdom, and providence of God, by making good what he had signified in the ancient Scriptures concerning it; either in mystical adumbrations, or by express predictions; understood according to those infallible expositions, which the apostles did receive from the instruction of our Lord, or from illumination of that Spirit which dictated the Scriptures: the particular instances, as being obvious, and requiring large discourse, I now forbear to mention.

2. It was needful in congruity to other events foretold, and in order to the accomplishment of those designs which our Lord was to manage: the whole economy and harmony of the evangelical dispensation, as it is represented by the prophets, doth require it. It was, according to their predictions, designed, that Christ should erect a spiritual kingdom, and administer it for ever, with perfect equity, in great peace and prosperity; that he should in our behalf achieve glorious exploits, subduing all the adversaries of our salvation; (sin, death, and hell;) that he should establish a new covenant, upon better promises, of another eternal most happy life, assuring to the embracers thereof an entire reconciliation and acceptance with God; that he should convert the world to faith in God, and observance of his will. In execution of these purposes, it was declared that he should undergo suffering, and be put to death in a most disgraceful and painful manner. It consequently must be supposed, that from such a death he should conspicuously and

wonderfully be restored to life; how otherwise could it appear, that he did reign in glory, that he had obtained those great victories, that he had vanquished death, that the former curses were avoided, God appeased, and mankind restored to favour by him? Had the grave swallowed him up, had God left his soul in hell, had he rested under the dominion of common mortality, had, after his dismal passions, no evidence of special favour toward him shone forth, what ground had there been to believe those great things? Who would have been persuaded of them? The Scripture therefore, which 'foretelleth the sufferings of our Lord, and the glories following them;' which saith, that 'having drunk of the brook in the way, he should lift up his head;' that 'when he had made his soul an offering for sin, he should prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand;' that 'because he had poured out his soul unto death, God would divide him a portion with the great, and he should divide the spoil with the strong;' that 'unto him whom man despised, to him whom the nation abhorred, kings should look and arise, princes should worship;'¹ the Scripture, I say, foretelling these events, doth consequentially imply the needfulness of his resurrection.

3. It was requisite in itself; or in respect to the many great ends for which it serveth, and the excellent fruits, which it is apt to produce: as will appear by reflecting on those, which are suggested in the New Testament.

¹ 1 Pet. i. 11; Luke, xxiv. 26; Psalm cx. 7; Isaiah, liii. 10, 12; xlix. 7.

I pass by its particular usefulness in regard to our Lord's apostles and disciples; its serving to reinforce their faith, and rear their hopes, being staggered by his passion; to comfort them in those sorrowful apprehensions, and despondencies of heart, which arose from the frightful events befalling him; to enlighten their minds by more perfect instruction, removing their ignorance, and reforming their mistakes concerning him, and the things of his kingdom; to furnish them with instructions and orders requisite for managing the employments committed to them; to arm them by consolatory discourses and gracious promises of support against the difficulties, hazards, and troubles they were to encounter, in the profession and propagation of his doctrine; in fine, by all his admirable deportment with them, and his miraculous departure from them, to confirm them in their faith, and encourage them in their duty: these particular uses, I say, we shall pass over, insisting only upon those more common ends and effects in which ourselves and all Christians are more immediately concerned.

4. A general end of it was the production and corroboration of faith in us concerning all the doctrines of our religion; for that by it the truth of all our Lord's declarations concerning his own person, his office, his power, his precepts and his promises (to the highest pitch of conviction and satisfaction) was assured; it being hardly possible, that any miracle could be greater in itself for confirmation of the whole, or more proper for ascertaining the parts of our religion.¹ But more particularly;

¹ Chrys. in Rom. i. 4.

5. First, From it the dignity of our Lord's person, and his especial dearness to God (to the voidance of all exceptions, and surmises against him) did appear.

If the meanness of his birth and parentage, if the low garb and dim lustre of his life, if the bitter pains and shameful disgraces of his death, (however accompanied with rare qualities shining in him, and wonderful deeds achieved by him,) in persons standing at distance, casting superficial glances on things, and judging by external appearances,¹ might breed disadvantageous apprehensions, or suspicions concerning him, whether he were indeed, as he pretended, the Son of God, designed by him to be the Saviour of mankind, 'the Lord of all things,' the Judge of the world; the wonderful power, and signal favour of God demonstrated in his resurrection, served to discuss those mists, and to correct such mistakes, evincing those temporary depressions to have been only dispensations preparatory toward his greater exaltation in dignity, and apparent favour with God; 'for though' saith St. Paul, 'he was crucified out of weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God';² that is, although in his sufferings the infirmity of our nature assumed by him was discovered, yet by his recovering life, the divine power attending him was eminently declared; it was indeed 'an excessive grandeur of power, an energy of the might of strength,' which God did exert 'in the raising of Christ from the dead,'³ as the apostle laboureth to express the inexpressible eminency of this miracle; and being so high an instance of power, it

¹ John, vii. 24.² 2 Cor. xiii. 4.³ Eph. i. 19.

was consequently a special mark of favour; God not being lavish of such miracles, or wont to stretch forth his arm in behalf of any person, to whom he doth not bear extraordinary regard: the which consequence also, by reflecting on the circumstances, and nature of this event, will further appear.

He was persecuted and put to death as a notorious malefactor, and an enemy to God, to true religion, to the common peace, to goodness; and his being delivered up to suffer was an enforcement of that pretence; for his adversaries thence did argue, that God had disavowed, and deserted him; they insulted over him as one in a forlorn condition, 'esteeming him (as the prophets foretold) stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted:'¹ but God thus, by his own hand, undoing what they had done against him, did plainly confute their reasonings, did evidence their accusations to be false, and their surmises vain, did in opposition to their suggestions approve him a friend and favourite of God, a patron of truth, a maintainer of piety and peace; one meriting, because obtaining, the singular countenance and succour of God.

And if yielding our Lord over to death (which being a total incapacity of enjoying any good, doth signify an extremely bad state) might imply God's displeasure or disregard toward him; (as indeed it did in a sort, he standing in our room to undergo the inflictions of divine wrath and justice;) then answerably restoring him to life, (which, as the foundation of enjoying any good, doth represent the best condition,) must demonstrate a singular ten-

¹ Isaiah, liii. 4; Psalm lxxi. 11; xxii. 8.

derness of affection, with a full approbation and acceptance of his performances: this indeed far more pregnantly doth argue favour, than that could imply displeasure; for that may happen to the best men upon other grounds, this can bear no other than a favourable interpretation.

Further, to give life doth ground that relation which is deepest in nature, and importeth most affection; whence in the holy style, to raise up to life, is termed to beget; and 'the regeneration' is put for the 'resurrection;' ¹ so that it being a paternal act, signifieth a paternal regard; ² and thence perhaps St. Paul telleth us, that our Lord 'was declared, or defined to be the Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead.'³

6. Secondly, By our Lord's resurrection we may be assured concerning the efficacy of his undertakings for us: for considering it, we may not doubt of God's being reconciled to us, of obtaining the pardon of our sins, and acceptance of our persons, of receiving all helps conducive to our sanctification, of attaining final happiness; in case we are not on our parts deficient; all those benefits by our Lord's resurrection, as a certain seal, being ratified to us, and in a manner conferred on us.

As God, in the death of our Lord, did manifest his wrath towards us, and execute his justice upon us; so in raising him thence correspondently God did express himself appeased, and his law to be satisfied; as we in his suffering were punished, 'the iniquity of us all being laid upon him,'⁴ so in his resurrection we were acquitted and restored to

¹ Acts, xiii. 33.

² Rom. i. 4.

³ Matt. xix. 28.

⁴ Isa. liii. 6.

grace; as Christ did merit the remission of our sins, and the acceptance of our persons by his passion; so God did consign them to us in his resurrection; it being that formal act of grace whereby, having sustained the brunt of God's displeasure, he was solemnly reinstated in favour, and we representatively or virtually in him; so that (supposing our due qualifications, and the performances requisite on our parts) we thence become completely justified, having not only a just title to what justification doth impart, but a real instatement therein; confirmed by the resurrection of our Saviour: whence 'he was delivered,' saith St. Paul, 'for our offences, and raised again for our justification:' 'and who then,' saith the same apostle, 'shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again.'¹ Our justification and absolution are, you see, rather ascribed to the resurrection of Christ, than to his death; for that indeed his death was a ground of bestowing them; but his resurrection did accomplish the collation of them; for since, doth the apostle argue, God hath acknowledged satisfaction done to his justice, by discharging our surety from restraint, and from all further prosecution; since in a manner so notorious, God hath declared his favour toward our proxy; what pretence can be alleged against us, what suspicion of displeasure can remain? Had Christ only died, we should not have been condemned, our punishment being already undergone; yet had we not been fully discharged, without that express warrant and acquit-

¹ Rom. iv. 25; viii. 33, 34; 2 Cor. v. 15.

tance which his rising doth imply; so again may St. Paul be understood to intimate, when he saith, 'If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins.'¹ Death (or that obligation to die, to which we did all for our transgressions stand devoted) was condemned, and judicially abolished by his death; but it was executed and expunged in his resurrection;² in which 'trampling thereon' he crushed it to nothing:³ wherefore therein mankind revived, and received 'the gift of immortality;' that being a clear pledge, and full of security, that 'as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.'⁴ "He," saith St. Chrysostom, "by his resurrection dissolved the tyranny of death, and with himself raised up the whole world."⁵ "By the pledge of his resurrection," saith St. Ambrose, "he loosed the bands of hell;" "thereby," saith St. Leo, "death received its destruction, and life its beginning;" therein not only the natural body of Christ was raised, but the mystical body also, each member of his church was restored to life, being thoroughly rescued from the bondage of corruption, and translated into a state of immortality;⁶ so that 'God,' saith St. Paul, 'hath quickened us together with Christ, and raised us together, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.'⁷

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 17.

² Heb. ii. 14; 2 Tim. i. 10; Rom. viii. 3; v. 18; vi. 23; 1 Cor. xv. 14.

³ Morte calcata surrexit. Hier. Ep. 129.

⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 21.

⁵ Chrys. Rom. i. 4.

⁶ Chrys. tom. v. Or. 84. Resurrectionis pignore vincula solvit Dominus suæ inferni, &c. Ambr. ad Grat. Per resurrectionem Christi et mors interitum, et vita accepit initium. Leo. M. Ep. 81.

⁷ Ephes. ii. 5, 6. Rom. viii. 21.

Hence in our baptism, (wherein justification, and a title to eternal life are exhibited to us,) as the death and burial of Christ are symbolically undergone by us; so therein also we do interpretatively rise with him: 'being,' saith St. Paul, 'buried with Christ in baptism, in it we are also raised together with him;'¹ and baptism, St. Peter telleth us, being an antitype of the passage through the flood, 'doth save us by the resurrection of Christ' presented therein.²

It also ministereth hopes of spiritual aid, sufficient for the sanctification of our hearts and lives; for that he, who raised our Lord from a natural death, thence doth appear both able and willing to raise us from a spiritual death, or from that mortal slumber in trespasses and sins, in which naturally we do lie buried, to 'walk in that newness of life' to which the Gospel calleth us; and in regard to which, 'God,' saith St. Peter, 'having raised his Son Jesus, sent him to bless us, in turning every one of us from his iniquities.'³

The same, consequently, is a sure earnest of our salvation; for, 'If,' saith St. Paul, 'when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.'⁴

7. Thirdly, By our Lord's resurrection, the verity of his doctrines, and the validity of his promises concerning the future state of men, are demonstrated, in a way most cogent, and most pertinent.⁵ Any miracle, notoriously true, doth indeed suffice to confirm any point of good doctrine; but

¹ Colos. ii. 13, 14.

² 1 Pet. iii. 21.

³ Eph. ii. 10; Apoc. xx. 6; Acts, iii. 26.

⁴ Rom. v. 10; 1 Pet. iii. 21.

⁵ John, xx. 31.

a miracle in kind, or involving the matter contested, hath a peculiar efficacy to that purpose. So did our Lord's resurrection, in way of palpable instance, with all possible evidence to sense, directly prove the possibility of our resurrection, together with all points of doctrine coherent thereto; (the substantial distinction of our soul from the body, its separate existence after the dissolution, and consequently its immortal nature, God's wise and just providence over human affairs in this state, the scrutiny and judgment of our actions hereafter, with dispensation of recompences answerable;) those fundamental ingredients of all religion, most powerful incentives to virtue, and most effectual discouragements from vice; the which (before much liable to doubt and dispute, little seen in the darkness of natural reason, and greatly clouded in the uncertainty of common tradition) as our Lord by his doctrine, first 'brought into clear light,' so by his resurrection he fully did show that light to be sincere and certain.' Infinitely weak and unsatisfactory were all the arguments which the most careful speculation could produce, for asserting those important verities, in comparison to that one sensible experiment attesting them: for if our Lord, a man as ourselves, did arise from the dead, (his soul, which from the cross descended into the invisible mansions, returning into his body,) then evidently our souls are distinct from our bodies, and capable of subsistence by themselves; then are they apt to exist perpetually; then may they be put to render an account for what is acted here, and accordingly may be dealt with. Hence may we see, that St. Paul discoursed reasonably, when he

¹ 2 Tim. i. 10 : Acts, xxvi. 23.

told the Athenians, that 'now God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained, exhibiting, an argument most persuasive to all, having raised him from the dead;' ¹ that St. Peter also might well aver, that 'God hath regenerated us to a lively hope of an incorruptible inheritance, reserved in heaven for us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' ²

Particularly the resurrection of our bodies, restoring our perfect manhood to us (a point wholly new to the world, which no religion had embraced, no reason could descry) was hereby so exemplified, that considering it, we can hardly be tempted to doubt of what the gospel teacheth about it; ³ that he, preceding as 'the first-born from the dead,' and 'the first fruits of them which sleep,' as 'our fore-runner,' and 'the Captain of life;' we *ἐν ἰδίῳ τάγματι*, in our due rank and season, as 'younger sons of the resurrection,' as serving under his command and conduct, in resemblance and conformity to him, shall follow; ⁴ so that, 'If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwelleth in us, he that raised up Jesus from the dead, shall also quicken our mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in us;' that 'If we have been planted with him in the likeness of his death, we shall also grow up in the likeness of his resurrection;' that 'As we have borne the image of the earthly man, so

¹ Acts, xvii. 31.

² 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

³ *Credentes resurrectionem Christi, in nostram quoque credimus, propter quos et ille obiit et resurrexit. Tert. de Pat. 9. Resurrectionem carnis per semetipsum primus initiavit. Cyp. Ep. 73.*

⁴ Apoc. i. 5; Col. i. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 20; Acts, iii. 15; v. 31; Heb. vi. 20; 1 Cor. xv. 23; Luke, xx. 36.

we shall also bear the image of the heavenly;’ so that ‘God, who raised our Lord, shall also raise us by his power;’¹ for we cannot but allow that consequence to be reasonable, which St. Paul doth imply, when he saith, ‘If we believe that Jesus died and rose again; even so them also, which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him,’² reducing them into a state conformable to his; by reunion of their body and soul.

8. Fourthly, it was a designed consequence of our Lord’s resurrection, that he thereby should acquire a just dominion over us; for, ‘to this end,’ saith St. Paul, ‘Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be the Lord, both of the dead and living.’³ By the obedience of his death he did earn that dominion, as a worthy recompense thereof; ‘He did by his blood purchase us’⁴ to be his subjects and servants: but from his resurrection he began to possess that reward, and to enjoy his purchase; it being the first step of his advancement to that royal dignity and ‘pre-eminence over all flesh;’⁵ to which, in regard to his sufferings, God did exalt him; concerning which, before his ascension, he said to his disciples, ‘All power is given me in heaven and earth:’⁶ on so many great accounts was our Lord’s resurrection necessary; so that it is no wonder, if God took such especial care to assure its truth, and recommend its belief to us; appointing so many choice persons by their testimony to assert, and inculcate it; to do so being often expressed a main part, and peculiar

¹ Rom. viii. 11; vi. 5; 1 Cor. xv. 22, 49; vi. 14.

² 1 Thes. iv. 14.

³ Rom. xiv. 9.

⁴ Acts, xx. 28.

⁵ John, xvii. 2; Phil. ii. 9.

⁶ Matt. xxviii. 18.


design of the office apostolical.¹ Nor is it strange, that to the hearty belief, and ingenuous profession of this one article (it enfolding, or inferring the truth of all other Christian doctrines) salvation is annexed; according to that assertion of St. Paul; 'The righteousness of faith saith thus, (or this is the purport of the Christian institution,) that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart, that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.'² Nor is it much, that a consideration of this point should be so continually present to the minds of the ancient Christians, that whenever they did meet, they should be ready to salute one another with a 'Christ is risen,' it importing so great benefits, and producing so excellent fruits; in regard whereto St. Paul expressed his so ardent desire, and high esteem of 'knowing Christ, and the power of his resurrection;'³ as the most valuable of all knowledges; which having in some measure declared, I come now briefly to apply.

1. First, then: the consideration of our Lord's resurrection should strengthen our faith, and quicken our hope in God, causing us firmly to believe his word, and confidently to rely upon his promises, especially those which concern our future state. God having thereby, as by a most sensible proof, against all objections of our feeble reason, demonstrated himself able, so by a most sure pledge declared himself willing, to bestow upon us a happy immortality, in gracious reward of our obedience: for seeing by so illustrious an instance,

Acts, i. 22; x. 41; xiii. 31.

² Rom. x. 6, 9.

³ Phil. iii. 10.

God hath manifested that he is thoroughly reconcileable to sinners, that 'he bountifully rewardeth obedience, that death and hell are vincible, what reason can we have to distrust his fidelity, to doubt of his power, or to despair of his mercy? Surely, he that was so faithful in raising our Lord from the grave, so notably rewarding his obedience and patience (in advancing him to supreme dignity and glory at his right hand) will not fail also to confer on us (walking in the footsteps of his piety) the promised inheritance of everlasting life and bliss, the never-fading crown of righteousness and glory: surely by this noble experiment we are clearly informed, and should be fully persuaded, that nothing can destroy us, nothing can harm , nothing can separate us from our God, and our happiness; that no force, no fraud, no spite of men, or rage of hell can finally prevail against us; what then reasonably can be dreadful, or discouraging to us; what should be able to drive us into distrust or despair?

2. This point affordeth matter of great joy, and an obligation thereto. If the news of our Saviour's first birth were (as an angel called them) 'good tidings of great joy to all people,'¹ how much more may the news concerning this second nativity of him be hugely gladsome? for in that birth he did but assume our flesh, in this he did advance it; then he began to sustain our infirmities, now he surmounted them; by his incarnation he became 'subject to death,' by his resurrection death was subdued to him;² at that he entered into the field, and set upon the bloody conflict with our foes; in

¹ Luke, ii. 10.

² Phil. ii. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 57.

this he returned a triumphant conqueror, having utterly vanquished and quelled them; the fury of the world, the malice of hell, the tyranny of sin, the empire of death, all of them combined to render us miserable, he did in his resurrection perfectly triumph over. And doth it not then become us to attend his glorious victories with our joyful gratulations?¹ Is it not extremely comfortable to behold our gallant champion (the only champion of our life and welfare) after all the cruel blows which the infernal powers laid on him, after all the ghastly wounds which human madness did inflict; after he had passed through the scorching flames of divine wrath and justice, after he had felt the sorest pangs of death, perfectly recovered from all those distresses; standing upright and trampling on the necks of his proud enemies? Are not most sprightly expressions of gratitude, are not most cheerful acclamations of praise due from us to the invincible 'Captain of our salvation?' Shall we not with great alacrity of mind contemplate the happy success of that mighty enterprise, wherein no less our welfare, than his glory, was concerned? Is it not a pleasure to consider ourselves so exempted from that fatal doom, to which all the humane race was sentenced; to see life and immortality so springing forth upon us; to view ourselves, the children of dust and corruption, from hence in age and dignity, so nigh equalled to the first-born sons of the creation?

It is said of the first disciples, that although they saw, and felt our Lord risen, yet 'for joy they could not believe it';² so incredibly good was

¹ Chrys. tom. v. Orat. 85.

² Luke, xxiv. 41.

the news to them; excess of love and delight choked, or rather suspended their faith; we cannot be such infidels from surprise, but let us be as faithful in our joy.¹

3. Great consolation surely it ought to breed in us, to consider, that by this event our redemption is completed, and we are become entirely capable of salvation; that in it a full discharge is exhibited from the guilt, and from the punishment of all our sins, whereof we do truly repent; that God's justice appeareth satisfied, and his anger pacified; that is countenance shineth out clearly with favour and mercy toward us; that our condemnation is reversed, our ransom is accepted, our shackles are loosed, and our prison set open; so that with full liberty, security, and hope, we may walk forward in the paths of righteousness, toward our better country, the region of eternal felicity. Further,

4. This consideration should be a forcible engagement upon us to obedience and holy life. Our Lord did, by his resurrection, gain a dominion over us,² unto which, if we do not submit, we shall be very injurious and wicked; unto which, if we do not correspond by all humble observance, we shall be very ungrateful and undutiful: 'He was raised to bless us, in turning every one of us³ from our iniquities;³ and no less unhappy, than unworthy we shall be, if we defeat that gracious purpose.' It is the condition of our obtaining the happy fruits and benefits of his resurrection, that we should ourselves rise with him 'unto righteousness and newness of life;⁴ by not complying therewith, we shall render

¹ Quod credunt tardiùs, non est perfidiæ, sed amoris. Chrysost. Serm. 81.

² Rom. xiv. 9.

³ Act. iii. 26.

⁴ Rom. vi. 4.

his resurrection unprofitable to us, becoming unworthy and incapable of any good advantage thereby. 'Awake,' saith the apostle, 'thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life;' to awake from our spiritual slumber, to arise from dead works, are the terms on which Christ doth offer that eternal happy life; for, as the pains and ignominies of his death will no-wise avail those who are not conformable to his death in dying to sin, and mortifying their lusts, so will not they be concerned in the joys and glories of his resurrection, who are not planted in the likeness thereof by renovation of their minds, and reformation of their lives; 'for as he died, so he was also raised for us, that we should not henceforth live to ourselves, but unto him who died and rose again for us.'² Our sins did slay him, it must be our repentance that reviveth him to us, our obedience that maketh him to live in our behalf; for Christ is not in effect risen to impenitent people; as they continue dead in trespasses and sins, as they lie buried in corruption of heart and life, so their condemnation abideth, and death retaineth its entire power over them; they shall not *καταντᾶν εἰς τὴν ἐξανάστασιν*, 'attain unto that happy resurrection,'³ whereof our Lord's resurrection was the pledge and pattern; so did our Lord assure us in his preaching: 'He,' said our Lord, 'that believeth in the Son (that is, who with a sincere, strong, and lively faith, productive of due obedience, believeth in him) hath everlasting life;' but *ὁ ἀπειθῶν*, 'he that disobeyeth (or with a practical infidelity disbelieveth) the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath

² Eph. v. 14. ³ Phil. iii. 10; Rom. vi. 5; 2 Cor. v. 15.

³ Phil. iii. 11

of God abideth on him;'¹ whence we may well infer with St. Paul, 'Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh; for if we live after the flesh, we shall die; but if through the Spirit we do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live;'² that is, assuredly by obeying God's will we shall obtain, by disobedience we must forfeit all the benefits of our Lord's resurrection.

5. Lastly, the contemplation of this point should elevate our thoughts and affections unto heaven and heavenly things, above the sordid pleasures, the fading glories, and the unstable possessions of this world; for 'him we should follow whithersoever he goeth;'³ rising with him, not only from all sinful desires, but from all inferior concerns, soaring after him in the contemplation of our minds, and affections of our heart; that 'although we are absent from the Lord in the body, we may be present with him in spirit,' having our 'conversation in heaven,' and 'our heart there, where our treasure is;'⁴ for if our souls do still grovel on the earth, if they be closely affixed to worldly interests, deeply immersed in sensual delights, utterly 'enslaved to corruption,' we do not 'partake' of our Lord's resurrection, being quite severed from his living body, and continuing in vast distance from him: I shall therefore conclude, recommending that admonition of St. Paul; 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on

¹ John, iii. 15, 36.

² Rom. viii. 13.

³ Rev. xiv. 4; Eph. ii. 6.

⁴ 2 Cor. v. 6; Phil. i. 23; Phil. iii. 20; Matt. vi. 21. &c.

the earth ; for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God ;' that ' when Christ, who is our life shall appear, then ye may also appear with him in glory.'¹ *Amen.*

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

¹ 2 Pet. ii. 19 ; Rom. viii. 21 ; Gal. vi. 8 ; Apoc. iii. 1 ; 1 Tim. v. 6 ; Gal. iii. 1.

SERMON IV.

JESUS, THE SON OF GOD, PROVED BY
HIS RESURRECTION. •

• •
BY ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON.

[JOHN TILLOTSON was born in 1630. He was elevated to the Archbishopal see of Canterbury in 1691 ; and died, 1694.]

S E R M O N I V.

ROM. I. 4.

And declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

ST. PAUL, in the beginning of this epistle, (according to his custom in the rest,) styles himself an apostle, particularly called and set apart by God for the preaching of the Gospel; the main subject whereof was, 'Jesus Christ our Lord;' who as he was, according to his divine nature, 'the eternal Son of God,' so according to his human nature, he was not only 'the Son of Man,' but also 'the Son of God.' 'According to the flesh (that is, the weakness, and frailty, and mortality of his human nature) he was the Son of David;' that is, of his posterity by his mother, who was of that house and line. 'Made of the seed of David, according to the flesh;'¹ 'but according to the Spirit of Holiness, (that is, in regard of that divine power of the Holy Ghost, which was manifest in him, especially in his resurrection

¹ Rom. i. 3.

from the dead,) he was demonstrated to be the Son of God;’ even according ‘to his human nature: ‘declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.’

All the difficulty in the words, ‘is concerning the meaning of this phrase, of Christ’s being ‘declared to be the Son of God.’ The word is *ὁρισθέντος*, which most frequently in Scripture does signify predestinated, decreed, determined; but it likewise signifies that which is defined, declared, demonstrated, put out of all doubt and controversy. And in this sense our translation renders it. As if the apostle had said, that our Lord Jesus Christ, though according to the frailty and weakness of his human nature, he was of the seed of David; yet in respect of that divine power of the Holy Ghost, which manifested itself in him, especially in his resurrection from the dead, he was ‘declared to be the Son of God with power;’ that is, mightily, powerfully demonstrated to be so; so as to put the matter out of all dispute and controversy.

And therefore following our own translation, I shall handle the words in this sense, as containing this proposition in them: ‘That the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, by the Holy Ghost, is a powerful demonstration that he was the Son of God.’

And it will conduce very much to the clearing of this proposition to consider these two things.

First, Upon what account Christ, as man, is said to be ‘the Son of God.’

Secondly, In what sense he is said to be ‘declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead.’ The consideration of these two particu-

lars will fully clear this proposition, and the apostle's meaning in it.

First, Upon what account Christ, as man, is said to be 'the Son of God.' And for our right apprehension of this matter, it is very well worthy our observation, that Christ, as man, is no where in Scripture said to be 'the Son of God,' but with relation to the divine power of the Holy Ghost, some way or other eminently manifested in him; I say. the divine power of the Holy Ghost, as the Lord and Giver of life, as he is called in the ancient creeds of the Christian church. For as men are naturally said to be the children of those from whom they receive their life and being; so Christ, as man, is said to be 'the Son of God,' because he had life communicated to him from the Father, by an immediate power of the Spirit of God, or the Holy Ghost. First at his conception, which was by the Holy Ghost. The conception of our blessed Saviour was an immediate act of the power of the Holy Ghost, overshadowing, as the Scripture expresseth it, the blessed mother of our Lord. And then at his resurrection, when after his death he was, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, raised to life again.

Now upon these two accounts only, Christ, as man, is said in Scripture to be 'the Son of God.' He was really so upon account of his conception; but this was secret and invisible: but most eminently and remarkably so upon account of his resurrection, which was open and visible to all.

1. Upon account of his conception by the power of the Holy Ghost. That upon this account he was called 'the Son of God,' St. Luke most expressly tells us, Luke, i. 35, where the angel tells the vir-

gin Mary, that 'the Holy Ghost should come upon her, and the power of the Highest should overshadow her, and therefore that holy thing which should be born of her, should be called the Son of God.' And this our Saviour means by 'the Father's sanctifying him, and sending him into the world;' for which reason he says he might justly call himself 'the Son of God.'¹ 'If he call them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God?' If there had been no other reason, this had been sufficient to have given him the title of 'the Son of God,' that he was brought into the world by the sanctification, or divine power of the Holy Ghost.

2. Christ is also said in Scripture to be 'the Son of God,' and to be declared to be so upon account of 'his resurrection from the dead,' by the power of the Holy Ghost. His resurrection from the dead is here in the text ascribed to 'the Spirit of Holiness,' or the Holy Ghost. And so in other places of Scripture, 'If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you:'² and, 'being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit;'³ that is, he suffered in that frail mortal nature which he assumed; but was raised again by the power of the Holy Ghost, of the Spirit of God which resided in him. And upon this account he is expressly said in Scripture to be 'the Son of God:' 'I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I be-

John, x. 35, 36.

² Rom. viii. 11.³ 1 Pet. iii. 18.

gotten thee ;' to which perhaps the apostle alludes here in the text, when he says that Christ ' was decreed to be the Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead.' To be sure these words, ' this day have I begotten thee,' St. Paul expressly tells us were accomplished in the resurrection of Christ; as if God, by raising him from the dead, had begotten him, and decreed him to be his Son. ' And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the Fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.'²

He was ' the Son of God' before, as he was conceived by the Holy Ghost; but this was secret and invisible, and known only to the mother of our Lord. And therefore God thought fit to give a public and visible demonstration of it, so as to put the matter out of all question: he declared him in a powerful manner to be his Son, by giving him a new life after death, by raising him from the dead; and by this new and eminent testimony given to him, declared him again to be his Son, and confirmed the title which was given him before, upon a true, but more secret account, of his being conceived by the Holy Ghost.

And as our Saviour is said to be ' the Son of God' upon this twofold account, of his conception by the Holy Ghost, and his resurrection to life by the Spirit of God, so the Scripture (which does solicitously pursue a resemblance and conformity between Christ and Christians) does likewise upon

¹ Psalm ii. 7.

² Acts, xiii. 32, 33.

a twofold account (answerable to our Saviour's birth and resurrection) call true believers and Christians, 'the children of God;' viz. upon account of their regeneration or new birth, by the operation of the Spirit of God; and upon account of their resurrection to eternal life, by the power of the same Spirit.

Upon account of our regeneration and becoming Christians by the power and operation of the Holy Spirit of God upon our minds, we are said to be the children of God, as being regenerated and born again by the Holy Spirit of God. And this is our first adoption. And for this reason the Spirit of God conferred upon Christians at their baptism, and dwelling and residing in them afterwards, is called 'the Spirit of adoption.' 'Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby you cry, Abba Father;'¹ and believers are said to 'receive the adoption of sons; God having sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying Abba Father.'² That is, all Christians, forasmuch as they are regenerated by the Holy Spirit of God, and having the Spirit of God dwelling in them, may with confidence call God Father, and look upon themselves as his children. So the apostle tells us, 'that as many as are led (or acted) by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God.'³

But though we are said to be children of God upon account of our regeneration, and the Holy Spirit of God dwelling and residing in Christians; yet we are eminently so, upon account of our resurrection to eternal life, by the mighty power of God's Spirit. This is our final adoption

¹ Rom. viii. 15.

² Gal. iv. 5, 6.

³ Rom. viii. 14.

and the consummation of it; and therefore this is called 'the glorious liberty of the sons of God,' because by this we are for ever 'delivered from the bondage of corruption;' and by way of eminency, 'the adoption,' viz. 'the redemption of our bodies.'

We are indeed 'the sons of God' before, upon account of the regenerating and sanctifying virtue of the Holy Ghost; but finally and chiefly, upon account of our resurrection by the power of the Divine Spirit. So St. John tells us, that then we shall be declared to be 'the sons of God,' after another manner than we are now: 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God.' Now we are the sons of God, (that is, our adoption is begun in our regeneration and sanctification,) 'but it doth not yet appear what we shall be;' we shall be much more eminently so at the resurrection. 'We know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him.'

But the most express and remarkable text to this purpose, is, where good men, after the resurrection, are for this reason said to be 'the children of God,' because they are 'the children of the resurrection.' 'But they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage, neither can they die any more; for they are equal to the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.'³ For this reason they are said to be 'the children of God,' because they are raised by him to a new life; and to be

¹ Rom. viii. 21.

² 1 John, iii. 1.

³ Luke, xx. 35, 36.

made partakers of that which is promised to them, and reserved for them. For all that are raised by the power of God, out of the dust of the earth, are not therefore 'the children of God;' but only they that have part in the blessed resurrection to eternal life, and 'do inherit the kingdom prepared for them.' Not those who are raised to a perpetual death, and the 'resurrection of condemnation:' these are not 'the children of God;' but 'the children of wrath and the children of perdition.'

But the resurrection of the just, is the full and final declaration that we are 'the children of God;' not only because we are restored to a new life, but because at the resurrection, we are admitted to the full possession of that blessed inheritance which is purchased for us, and promised to us.

And the Spirit of God which is conferred upon believers in their regeneration, and afterwards dwells and resides in them, is the pledge and earnest of our final adoption, by our resurrection to eternal life; and upon this account and no other, is said to be the 'earnest' of our future inheritance, and the 'seal' and confirmation of it. 'In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession;'¹ that is, the Holy Spirit of God which Christians were made partakers of, upon their sincere belief of the Christian religion, is the seal and earnest of our resurrection to eternal life; as the apostle plainly tells us, in that remarkable text, Rom. viii. 11; 'If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he

¹ Eph. i. 13.

that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.'

I have been the longer upon this, because it serves fully to explain to us those obscure phrases, of the 'seal' and 'earnest,' and 'first fruits of the Spirit,' which many have mistaken to import some particular and spiritual revelation or impression upon the minds of good men, assuring them of their salvation. Whereas the apostle intended no more by them, but that the Spirit of God which dwells in believers, enabling them 'to mortify the deeds of the flesh, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit,' is a pledge and earnest to us of a blessed resurrection to eternal life, by the power of the Spirit of God which now dwells in us, and is the same Spirit which raised up Jesus from the dead. And in this chapter, the Spirit of God is said 'to bear witness to our spirits,' that is, to assure our minds, 'that we are the children of God;'¹ that is, that we are his children now, and consequently heirs of a glorious resurrection to eternal life. For so it follows in the next words, 'and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together.' And this being glorified together with Christ at the resurrection, he calls, 'the manifestation of the sons of God.'² Thus you see how in conformity to 'the Son of God,' our elder brother, we are said to be 'the sons of God,' because we are now regenerated, and shall at the last day be raised up to eternal

¹ Rom. viii. 16.

² Ib. verse 19.

life, by the power of the Spirit of God. I proceed to the

Second thing I propounded to speak to, for the clearing of these words; namely, in what sense Christ is said to be 'declared,' or 'demonstrated to be the son of God by his resurrection from the dead.' By which the apostle means these two things:—

1. That by his resurrection from the dead he was approved by God to be the true Messiah, and vindicated to the world from all suspicion of being a deceiver and impostor. And secondly,

2. That hereby God gave testimony to the truth and divinity of his doctrine.

1. By his resurrection from the dead, he was approved by God to be the true Messiah, foretold by the prophets, and expected at that time by the Jews, and sufficiently vindicated to the world to be no deceiver and impostor.

And for our fuller understanding of this, we are to consider these two things:—

(1.) What the apprehensions and expectations of the Jews were concerning the Messiah. And,

(2.) What the many crimes were which they laid to our Saviour's charge, and for which they condemned him.

(1.) What the apprehensions and expectations of the Jews were concerning the Messiah. And it is very plain from the evangelical history, that they generally apprehended these two things of him: that the Messiah was to be 'the Son of God,' and 'the king of Israel;' and therefore that our Saviour, by affirming himself to be the Messiah, did call himself 'the Son of God,' and 'the king of

Israel,' Andrew tells his brother Simon 'we have found the Messias.'¹ Philip tells Nathanael, 'we have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write;'² that is, the Messias. Nathanael upon discourse with our Saviour, being convinced that he was the Messias, owns him in these terms: 'Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel.'³ Peter declares his belief that he was the Christ, or the Messias, in these words, 'we believe and are sure that thou art the Son of the living God.'⁴ This appears likewise from the high-priest's question to him, 'Art thou the Christ, (that is, the Messias,) the Son of the living God?'⁵ or as it is in St. Mark, 'the Son of the blessed;' compared with Pilate's question, 'Art thou the king of the Jews?' And when he was upon the cross, some reviled him under the notion of 'the Son of God.' 'If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.'⁶ Others, under the notion of the king of Israel. 'If he be the king of Israel, let him come down from the cross.'⁷ From all which it is plain that the Jews expected and believed, that the true Messias was to be 'the Son of God,' and 'the king of Israel;' and whoever was not so, was a deceiver and impostor. But our Saviour affirmed himself to be the true Messias, and 'the Son of God.' Now God by raising him from the dead, did abundantly vindicate him to the world, from all suspicion of imposture; and gave testimony to him, that he was all that he said of himself, viz. 'the true Messias,' and 'the Son of God.'

¹ John, i. 41.² Ib. verse 45.³ Ib. verse 49.⁴ John, vi. 69.⁵ Matt. xxvi. 63.⁶ Matt. xxvii. 40.⁷ Ib. verse 42.

Which will further appear, if we consider, 2dly, What were the crimes which the Jews laid to our Saviour's charge, and for which they condemned him; and they were mainly these two, that by giving himself to be the Messias, he made himself king of Israel, and the Son of God. Of the first of these they accused him to Pilate, hoping, by this accusation, to make him guilty of sedition against the Roman government; for saying, that he was 'the king of Israel.' Of the other, they accused him to the chief priests, as being guilty of blasphemy, in that not being the Messias, he called himself 'the Son of God.' And upon this they laid the main stress, as being a thing that would condemn him by their law. They charged him with this in his lifetime, as appears by those words of our Saviour, 'Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God?'¹ And, when he was arraigned before the chief priests, they accused him of this, and he owning this charge, 'that he called himself the Son of God,' upon this they judged him guilty of death. 'Then the high-priest rent his clothes, and said, he hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witness? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye?' They answered, he is guilty of death.² And when Pilate told them, that he found no fault in him, they still instance in this as his crime, 'We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.'

Now, this being the crime which was charged upon him, and for which he was crucified and put

¹ John, x. 36.² Matt. xxvi. 65, 66.
John, xix. 7.

to death; God, by raising him from the dead, and taking him up into heaven, gave testimony to him, that he was no impostor, and that he did not vainly arrogate to himself to be the *Messias* and the 'Son of God.' God, by raising him from the dead, by the power of the Holy Ghost, gave a mighty demonstration to him, that he was 'the Son of God.' For which reason he is said by the apostle, to be 'justified by the Spirit.' The Spirit gave testimony to him at his baptism, and by the mighty works that appeared in him in his lifetime; but he was most eminently and remarkably 'justified by the Holy Ghost, by his resurrection from the dead;' God hereby bearing him witness, that he was unjustly condemned, and that he assumed nothing to himself, but what of right did belong to him, when he said he was the *Messias*, and 'the Son of God.' For how could a man that was condemned to die for calling himself 'the Son of God,' be more remarkably vindicated, and more clearly proved to be so, than by being raised from the dead, by the power of God?

And next, God did consequently hereby give testimony to the truth and divinity of our Saviour's doctrine. Being proved by his resurrection to be 'the Son of God,' this proved him to be a teacher sent by him, and what he declared to the world was the mind and will of God. For this none was more likely to know, and to report truly to mankind, than 'the Son of God,' who came from 'the bosom of his Father.' And because the resurrection of Christ is so great a testimony to the truth of his doctrine, hence it is, that St. Paul tells us, that

the belief of this one article of Christ's resurrection, is sufficient to a man's salvation. 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.'¹ The reason is plain, because the resurrection of Christ confirmed the truth and divinity of his doctrine; so that the belief of our Saviour's resurrection does by necessary consequence infer the belief of his whole doctrine. That God raised him from the dead after he was condemned and put to death for calling himself 'the Son of God,' is a demonstration that he really was 'the Son of God;' and, if he was 'the Son of God,' the doctrine which he taught was true, and from God.

And thus I have shown you, how the resurrection of Christ from the dead is a powerful demonstration that he was 'the Son of God.'

All that remains is briefly to draw some practical inferences from the consideration of our Saviour's resurrection.

1st. To confirm and establish our minds in the belief of the Christian religion, of which the resurrection of Christ from the dead is so great a confirmation. And therefore, I told you, that this one article is mentioned by St. Paul as the sum and abridgment of the Christian faith: 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' The belief of our Saviour's resurrection doth by necessary consequence infer the belief of his whole doctrine; for he who believes that God raised him from the dead, after he was put to death for calling himself 'the Son of God,' cannot but believe him to be 'the Son of God;' and conse-

¹ Rom. x. 9.

quently, that the doctrine which he delivered was from God.

2dly. The resurrection of Christ from the dead assures us of a future judgment, and of the recompences and rewards of another world. That Christ was raised from the dead, is a demonstration of another life after this; and no man that believes the immortality of our souls, and another life after this, ever doubted of a future judgment; so that by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, God hath given assurance unto all men of a future judgment, and consequently of the recompences and rewards of another world.

The consideration whereof ought to have a mighty influence upon us, more especially to these three purposes.

1st. To raise our minds above the present enjoyments of this life. Were but men convinced of this great and obvious truth, that there is an infinite difference between time and eternity, between a few days and everlasting ages; would we but sometimes represent to ourselves, what thoughts and apprehensions dying men have of this world, how vain and empty a thing it appears to them; how like a pageant and shadow it looks, as it passeth away from them; methinks, none of these things could be a sufficient temptation to any man to forget God and his soul; but notwithstanding all the present delights and allurements of sense, we should be strongly intent upon the concerns of another world, and almost wholly taken up with the thoughts of the vast eternity which we are ready to enter into. For what is there in this world, this vast and howling wilderness, this rude and barbarous country which we are but to pass

through, which should detain and entangle our affections, and take off our thoughts from our everlasting habitation, from that better, and that heavenly country, where we hope to live and to be happy for ever ?

2dly. The consideration of the rewards of another world should comfort and support us under the troubles and afflictions of this world. The hopes of a blessed resurrection are a very proper consideration to bear us up under the evils and pressures of this life. If we hope for so great a happiness hereafter, we may be contented to bear some afflictions in this world ; because the blessedness which we expect will so abundantly recompense and outweigh our present sufferings. So the apostle assures us, ' We know that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.'¹ The consideration whereof was that which made the primitive Christians to triumph in their sufferings, and in the midst of all their tribulations, ' to rejoice in the hopes of the glory of God ;' because their sufferings did really prepare and make way for their glory. So the same apostle tells us, ' Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; whilst we look not at the things which are seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.'²

3dly and lastly, The assurance of our future reward is a mighty encouragement to obedience and a holy life. What greater encouragement can we

¹ Rom. viii. 18.

² 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

have than this, that all, the good which we do in this world will accompany us into the other? 'That when we rest from our labours, our works will follow us?' That when we shall be stripped of other things, and parted from them, these will still remain with us, and bear us company? Our riches and honours, our sensual pleasures and enjoyments will all take their leave of us, when we leave this world; nay, many times they do not accompany us so far as the grave, but take occasion to forsake us, when we have the greatest need and use of them: but piety and virtue are 'that better part which cannot be taken from us.' All the good actions which we do in this world will go along with us into the other, and through the merits of our Redeemer procure for us, at the hands of a gracious and merciful God, a glorious and eternal reward; not according to the meanness of our services, but according to the bounty of his mind, and the vastness of his treasures and estate.

Now what an encouragement is this to holiness and obedience, to consider that it will all be our own another day; to be assured that whoever serves God faithfully, and does suffer for him patiently, does lay up so much treasure for himself in another world, and provides lasting comforts for himself, and faithful and constant companions, that will never leave him nor forsake him!

Let us then do all the good we can, while we have opportunity, and serve God with all our might, knowing that no good action that we do shall be lost and fall to the ground, that every grace and virtue that we exercise in this life, and every degree of them, 'shall receive their full recompence at the resurrection of the just.'

How should this inspire us with resolution and zeal and industry in the service of God, to have such a reward continually in our eye ! how should it tempt us to our duty, to have a crown and a kingdom offered to us, ' joys unspeakable and full of glory, such things as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man ! ' And ' such are the things which God hath laid up for them who love him heartily, and serve him faithfully in this world.'

SERMON V.

CHRIST THE FIRST FRUITS.

BY BISHOP BEVERIDGE.

[WILLIAM BEVERIDGE was born in 1637: in 1704 he was consecrated Bishop of St. Asaph, and died in 1708.]

S E R M O N V.

I CORINTHIANS, XV. 20.

*But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become
the first fruits of them that slept.*

WHEN we seriously consider how much the Son of God suffered for our sins, we cannot but be highly concerned, and troubled at the remembrance of those sins for which so great a Person suffered ; for certainly it was the greatest demonstration that ever was or could be given, of the divine displeasure against the sins of mankind, that no less a person than the Son of God himself was able to expiate them, nor he by any less means than his own blood. The consideration whereof, should not only deter us from the commission of sin hereafter, but it should make us loathe and abhor ourselves for those which we have committed heretofore. What grief, what horror should seize upon our spirits every time that we consider how the eternal Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, was affronted, was abused, was spit upon, was arraigned, was condemned, was crucified, was put to death, to the painful, to the shameful, to the

cursed death upon the cross, and all for those very sins, which we, ungrateful wretches that we are, have lived and delighted in! Methinks the remembrance of it should make us blush and be ashamed of ourselves, and never think that we can grieve enough for those sins, for which Christ himself not only grieved, but died.

But lest this consideration duly weighed, should lie so heavy upon our spirits, as by degrees to sink them down into despair, we must consider withal, that as the remembrance of Christ's suffering for our sins affords us great matter for grief and sorrow, so the remembrance of his resurrection supplies us with as much cause of joy and comfort. We had great reason the other day to lament and bewail those sins, which brought our blessed Lord with sorrow to his grave. And we have as great reason this day to rejoice and triumph, that he was raised again from it: which was so great, so exceeding great a blessing to mankind, that it ought to be our constant employment while we are upon earth, as it will be when we come to heaven, to praise and magnify the eternal God for it. At least upon every Lord's-day, which was therefore set apart for our Lord's service, because he rose upon it. But above all other Lord's-days, that which succeeded the Jewish Passover, wherein our Lord suffered, hath been all along devoted by the church to the memory of his resurrection, which happened upon it, and to our rejoicing and praising Almighty God for so great a mercy as that was.

This therefore being the proper work of the day, that I may prepare you the better for it, and assist you as well as I can in the due performance

of it, I shall endeavour to show what you ought to believe concerning the resurrection of Christ, and what cause you have to rejoice and to give thanks to God this day, that you can say with the holy apostle, 'Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.'

In which words we may observe,

I. That Christ did truly rise again.

II. That he thereby became 'the first fruits of, them that slept.'

In speaking to the first, we shall consider,

1. In what sense Christ is said to have risen from the dead.

2. What ground we have to believe that he did so.

3. What benefit we have received by it, for which we ought to rejoice, and give thanks unto God this day.

As for the first, in what sense Christ is said to have risen from the dead:—that we shall easily understand, if we do but consider, how that Christ so took our human nature upon him, that he became really and truly a man, of the same nature and substance with other men in all things except sin. Consisting, as other men do, of a rational soul and a terrestrial body, and both so united together, as that his body was quickened, informed, and actuated by his soul; by which means he performed all vital actions, and therefore was properly said to live, as we do, and that for several years together, until at length his body, by the excessive pain and torture that he suffered upon the cross, being made incapable of all vital motion, and so unfit for the soul to inhabit any longer, the knot was untied, and his soul was separated from his

body, and so continued for some time; during which time, although both the essential parts of man, his soul and body, subsisted, or were in being as well as they were before, yet not subsisting conjunctly, but separately, he was properly dead, as other men are, when their souls have left their bodies. And in this state he continued from Friday till Sunday morning; when his body being made a fit receptacle for the soul again, the same soul was again united to it, and so the same man that before was dead now lived again, and is therefore said to be 'raised from the dead,' or out of that state of death, wherein he had continued all that time; yea, he so lived again, as never to die more; but though it be above one thousand six hundred years since he rose again, he is still alive, and so will be for evermore.

• The next question is, what grounds we have to believe that Christ thus rose from the dead? In general, we have as much ground to believe that Christ rose from the dead, as we have to believe that we ourselves are now alive; or if you will, as much as it is possible for a thing of that nature to be capable of; for besides that it was plainly foreshown in the types, and infallibly foretold by the prophets under the law, and so could not but come to pass, we have the testimony of two angels for it, who were both eye-witnesses of the fact itself, for they saw him not only risen, but rising, and assisted him in it, by rolling away the stone which was at the mouth of the sepulchre where he lay, and told the disciples that came to the place to see him, that 'he was not there, but was risen.'¹ And

¹ Luke, xxiv. 4, 5, 6. Matt. xxviii. 6.

after he was risen, his disciples frequently saw him, conversed familiarly with him, yea, ate and drank with him as really as they had done it before his passion. And that it was the same person they knew by his visage, by the lineaments of his body, by his voice, and by the print of the spear in his side, and of the nails in his hands and feet where-with he had been fastened to the cross; which was so clear a demonstration, that it was the same body that was before crucified, that when one of his disciples doubted of it, whether it was he or no, he said to him, 'Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side;' which that disciple had no sooner done, but he was fully convinced that it was the same person that had those wounds given him upon the cross.'¹ And so his doubting proved the occasion of our being more confirmed in the truth of it.

And indeed it is much to be observed, that both St. Thomas himself, and the rest of the apostles, were so fully assured that their master Jesus was risen from the dead, that all the troubles and persecutions that they afterwards underwent for his sake, could never make them so much as doubt of it, much less deny it; but they all attested it to the last, and sealed it with their own blood; which certainly they would never have done, had they not been as sure that they had seen him alive after he had been dead, as that they had seen him so before he died. And questionless, there never was any matter of fact since the world began, so fully proved by the concurrent testimonies of so many

¹ John, xx. 27, 28.

persons, not only hazarding, but actually laying down their lives in the defence of it, as this was.

Neither must we think that this fundamental article of our Christian religion is grounded only upon the testimony of men and angels, for Christ himself hath given us so full, so clear a demonstration of it, that though no creature in the world had ever seen him after his resurrection, yet none could deny but that he did rise again; in that he did so exactly fulfil what he had promised before; for he told his disciples a little before his passion, that when he was gone from them, he would send another comforter, even the Holy Ghost unto them,¹ which you know he accordingly did upon the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost descending in a miraculous manner upon his disciples, and enabling them to speak all manner of languages.² But how was it possible for Christ to have done this, except he rose from the dead? Can a man that lies in the grave, and is not able to lift up himself from the earth; can such a one get up to heaven, and from thence send down the Spirit of God? It is impossible; for a dead man can do nothing, much less so great a thing as that was; and therefore his doing of it, is an undeniable argument that he is indeed risen from the dead.

To which we may also add, that infallible testimony that almighty God himself hath hereby given to this truth; in that he bore witness to them that preached it, 'both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will,' as the apostle speaks.³ For would he, who is truth itself, bear witness to a lie?

¹ John, xvi. 7.

² Acts, ii. 1, 2, 3.

³ Heb. ii. 4.

Would he have given such extraordinary power, and courage, and success to the apostles in publishing this unto the world, if it had not been a great truth? No certainly, every sermon that the apostles preached, every miracle that they wrought, every suffering they underwent, every danger they were in for Christ's sake, was a more than mathematical, a divine demonstration, that he is risen from the dead; especially considering, that how incredible soever it might seem at first, yet by the almighty power of God accompanying the publication of it, the whole world was soon convinced of the truth and certainty of this proposition, that Christ is risen from the dead; and therefore I need not insist any longer upon showing what grounds you have to believe it, seeing God himself hath proved it so effectually to you, that I dare say, you are all by his grace fully persuaded of it.

The other and principal thing to be considered in this subject, especially upon this day, is, what are those great benefits we have received by Christ's resurrection, for which we ought to rejoice and give thanks to God at each commemoration of it? In general they are so many and so great, that did we but fully understand them, and were we but truly sensible of them, nothing would come near our hearts this day but joy and thankfulness to God for so unspeakable a mercy as this was. It is past my skill either to describe or number them all to you; and therefore, I shall not undertake that, but only endeavour to present you with some such considerations about it, whereby your hearts may be duly affected and raised up to a more than ordinary pitch of joy and praise to God for the resurrection of Jesus Christ this day. For, .

1. Hereby he was declared to be the Messiah and the Son of God. As the apostle expressly asserts, where speaking of our Saviour, he saith, 'That he was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.'¹ 'That is, God, by raising Jesus from the dead by his Almighty power, did thereby fully declare and demonstrate to the world, that this Jesus whom he thus raised was his Son; not a mere man only, but the only begotten of the Father. So that by raising him from the dead, he confirms what he had said of him when he was baptized, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'² And therefore, what the Psalmist speaks of Christ in general, saying, 'I will declare the decree the Lord hath said unto me, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee;'³ the apostle applies to the resurrection of Christ.⁴ Because by that means God did declare to the world, that this Christ was his only begotten Son. Otherwise he would never have raised him from the dead, and so have confirmed all that he had ever said or done. So that the question which the high-priest propounded to our Saviour, saying, 'I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be Christ, the Son of God,'⁵ was now effectually answered by his being raised from the dead, and so declared to be so by God himself.

Now, what a mighty consolation is this unto us all, that our Saviour is by his resurrection declared to be no less a person than the Son of God! One so far above all creatures, that he hath absolute

¹ Rom. i. 4.

² Matt. iii. 17.

³ Psalm ii. 7.

⁴ Acts, xiii. 33; Heb. i. 5.

⁵ Matt. xxvi. 63.

authority over them. One, who being raised from the dead, is 'set at the right hand of God in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come.'¹ One so highly exalted by God, that he hath a name given him 'which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'² One whom the angels themselves are commanded to worship, and to acknowledge to be their Lord.³ And it is very observable that so they did immediately upon his resurrection, 'He is not here,' saith the angel, 'he is risen. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.'⁴ He is their Lord, it seems, as well as ours: 'all power being given to him both in heaven and earth,'⁵ as himself said after his resurrection. Now, what can, if this doth not, transport our hearts into holy ecstasies of joy and thankfulness to God, who hath provided so great, so mighty, so Almighty a Saviour for us? What cause have we all to sing with the blessed Virgin this day, 'My soul both magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour.' In God my Saviour,—what a comfort is this, that God himself should be our Saviour, or which is all one, our Saviour God; yet this is plainly declared to us, by his resurrection from the dead.

2. By Christ's resurrection from the dead, his gospel was established, and our faith confirmed in

¹ Eph. i. 20, 21. ² Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11. ³ Heb. i. 6.

⁴ Matt. xxviii. 6.

⁵ Ibid. 18.

him. The apostle, a little before my text, saith, 'If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain ;'¹ for all our expectations from him had been frustrated, all our hopes and confidence in him would have been groundless, because all his promises would have been void and of none effect, except he had risen from the dead ; for he would not have been in a capacity to have fulfilled them to us ; whereas, by his resurrection from the dead, all the promises which he, or God in him, hath made to mankind, are so far confirmed to us, that there is no place left for doubting or unbelief ; for, indeed, they were all comprehended and so fulfilled in this one, even in God's raising Christ from the dead, according to his promise : and how great joy and comfort this affords us the apostle intimates, saying, 'We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again.'²

Glad tidings indeed ! that as there are no good things but what God hath promised to us in Christ, so there are none of his promises but what he hath fulfilled and confirmed to us, by raising him from the dead. So that now we have no cause at all to doubt of any thing that is either said or promised in the gospel, for God himself hath fully approved and established, and set his own Almighty hand and seal to it. And therefore we may boldly say, that nothing was ever affirmed by Christ but what was true ; nothing foretold but what hath or shall be fulfilled ; nothing commanded but what is just and good ; nothing threatened but what shall be

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 17

² Act. xiii. 32, 33.

executed upon impenitent and unbelieving sinners; nothing promised but what shall certainly be performed to all that repent and believe the gospel. Away, therefore, with all doubts and diffidence about any thing that is there revealed: 'Heaven and earth may pass away, but Christ's word shall never pass away.'¹ Hath he said, 'I and my Father are one;'² then, whether we understand it or no, we may be confident of the truth of it. Hath he foretold that he will one day come in glory, and all the holy angels with him, 'and that he will then sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations?'³ Then you may be as certain that you shall one day see him upon his throne, as you are that ye are now in this place. Hath he commanded you to deny yourselves, to take up your cross and to follow him?⁴ Then, you may be sure, it is good and just, and necessary for you to do so. Hath he threatened destruction to all that live and die in their sins without repentance, saying, 'Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish?'⁵ Then there is no avoiding it, you must either repent or be damned. And hath he promised rest to all 'that labour and are heavy laden,' if they come to him? Then, there is no question can be made of it, but that he will most certainly do it; for we have not only his own word for it, but God the Father hath confirmed it to us by raising him from the dead; which, as it strengthens our faith, it must needs be matter of extraordinary joy and comfort to us; yea, all the joy and comfort that ever we expect from Christ, is grounded upon

¹ Matt. xxiv. 35. ² John, x. 30. ³ Matt. xxv. 31, 32.

⁴ Matt. xvi. 24.

⁵ Luke, xiii. 3.

this one article of our faith, that he is risen from the dead.

3. By the resurrection of Christ, we are fully assured that he hath made complete satisfaction for our sins, so that upon our repentance of them, they will all for his sake be certainly pardoned and forgiven us. This necessarily follows upon the former; and therefore the apostle joins them together in the place before quoted, saying, 'If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins.' Implying, that if Christ had not risen, our believing in him would have been to no purpose, and by consequence we should still lie under the guilt of our sins, obnoxious to eternal damnation for them; whereas, on the other side, Christ being indeed risen from the dead, as we have all the reason in the world to believe in him, so by our believing in him, 'we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins.'¹

And the reason in short is this; we by our affronting the majesty, dishonouring the name, and transgressing the commands of our great Creator, have incurred his displeasure, and rendered ourselves obnoxious to all the punishments, even to that death itself, which his law and justice have threatened against such ungrateful and rebellious creatures. But the debt which we have hereby contracted being so great, that it is impossible for us ever to pay it; the Son of God himself was pleased to undertake it for us, to become our surety, and to satisfy God's justice for our sins, by undergoing those punishments in our nature, which we must otherwise have undergone in our persons for

¹ Col. i. 14.

evermore. Hence, he having taken our nature upon him, suffered the extremity of the law, even death itself in our steads and for our sakes, in whose nature he suffered it; by which means, 'he was a propitiation for our sins, and not¹ for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.' Now, Christ having thus suffered death for us, and so paid that debt which was due from us to God, God was pleased the third day after to raise him up to life again, and so to open as it were the prison doors, and acknowledge himself fully satisfied for the sins of mankind, by having that death, which he had threatened to us, undergone in our nature, united to the person of his own Son. By virtue of which hypostatical union, that death was more and of greater value than the eternal death of all mankind could be. And God having thus discharged our Surety by raising him from the dead, all our obligations to punishments are now cancelled and made void, so soon as ever we perform those easy conditions which the gospel requires of us, in order to the applying the sufferings of our human nature in Christ, to our own particular persons. So that by the resurrection of Christ we are fully assured that the work of our redemption was finished, and that if it be not our own faults, our sins may be all pardoned, and our persons justified before God upon his account; who, as the apostle saith, 'was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification;'² that is, who died for our sins, and rose again, that by virtue of that death he might justify our persons before God.

Consider this all ye that are sensible of your

¹ 1 John, ii. 1, 2.

² Rom. iv. 25.

sins, and then tell me, whether you have not cause to rejoice and bless God this day for the resurrection of your Saviour? If Christ had not risen again, what a sad, what a dismal condition had you all been in! Like the fiends of hell, reserved 'in chains under darkness, to the judgment of the great day.' Whereas, now that Christ is dead and risen again, whatsoever sins you have committed, it is but repenting of them, and they shall all be pardoned. Howsoever you have incensed the wrath of God against you, it is but believing and obeying the gospel for the future, and he will be reconciled to you; for Christ 'was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him;' we have sinned, but he hath suffered for our sins; we have deserved death, but he hath undergone it for us. Neither did he only die for us, but is risen again to confirm and apply the merits of his death to us; 'Who then shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again.'¹ Let us, therefore, lay aside all melancholy and desponding thoughts this day, and put our whole trust and confidence on him that died and rose again for us. And to testify our acknowledgment of so great a mercy, let us spend this day in praising, in adoring, in magnifying the eternal God our Saviour, who is risen from the dead, and 'become the first fruits of them that slept.'

4. Christ being raised from the state of death, he is now able to raise us from a state of sin, and to quicken us with his own Spirit: so that our sancti-

¹ Rom. viii. 33, 34.

fication as well as our justification depended upon his resurrection : had he continued in his grave, all mankind had continued in their trespasses and sins ; but when he our head arose, we his members could not but rise with him, as the apostle assures us we did, saying, 'If ye then be risen with Christ.'¹ And elsewhere, 'buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.'² 'When, therefore, we were dead in trespasses and sins, God quickened us together with Christ.'³ That like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.'⁴ And as we thus rose in Christ our head, so he being risen, continually diffuses his Holy Spirit into all his members ; whereby we are actuated, and so enabled to repent, and obey his gospel ; for being raised from the dead, 'God hath exalted him with his right hand to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.'⁵ From whence it appears, that Christ being upon his resurrection advanced to heaven, doth from thence distribute not only his pardons for those sins which we repent of, but likewise grace to repent of our sins, that so they may be pardoned ; and by consequence all the graces of his Holy Spirit here comprehended under that of repentance. So that, whatsoever is necessary to be performed by us, in order to our pardon and salvation, Christ being raised from the dead, can now enable us to perform it, or as the apostle words it,

Col. iii. 1.

² Ibid. ii. 12.¹ Eph. ii. 5.⁴ Rom. vi. 4.⁵ Acts, v. 31.

‘We can do all things through Christ which strengthens us.’¹

Now how great a comfort is this to all such amongst you, as are weary of their sins, and desire to be eased of them, I need not tell you: you yourselves cannot but find it by your own experience, what a mighty refreshment it is in all your spiritual conflicts to consider, that your Saviour being risen from the dead, is always ready to assist you, and to supply you with such measures of his grace whereby you may be enabled, either totally to subdue your lusts, or effectually to withstand all temptations to them. For mine own part I verily think there is no joy, no pleasure in this world, comparable to that which riseth from a firm faith, and right apprehensions of Christ’s being always not only interceding for us in heaven, but also present with us upon earth, to direct, support, and carry us through the various changes and chances of this mortal life, till he hath brought us to himself in glory; that he is always more ready to help, than the devil can be to tempt us; that his grace is always sufficient for us. When we are in such straits and perplexities that we know not what to do, he presently conveys such light into our minds, whereby we plainly see the way we ought to walk in. When our souls are dejected, distressed, tormented with the remembrance of our former sins, he saith to us, as he did to the man in the gospel, Be of good cheer, my son, thy sins are all pardoned. When we meet with crosses and troubles in the world, which are apt to distract our thoughts, and to make our passions turbulent and unruly, he by

¹ Phil. iv. 13.

his Holy Spirit reduceth them into order, and gives us strength not only to bear, but to improve whatsoever happens to his glory and our own good. When we are touched with so quick a sense of our present infirmities, and the relics of sin and corruption still remaining in us, that he cuts us to the heart, and makes every thing uneasy and uncomfortable to us, he binds up our wounds, he healeth our troubled breasts, and gives rest to our souls, by assuring us that he himself will stand by us, and enable us not only to resist, but overcome all these our spiritual enemies. So that when we cry out in the words of the apostle, ‘O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?’ we may add with him, ‘I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ He that thinks not this to be matter of real joy, knows not as yet what it is to be a Christian.

5. By the resurrection of Christ, we are fully assured, that he will be our judge at the last day; as the apostle long ago observed, saying, that ‘now God commands all men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.’¹ It is true, his commission to judge the world was granted to him before his passion; ‘for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son,’ as he himself tells us.² But it was sealed and published

¹ Rom. vii. 24, 25.

² Acts, xvii. 30, 31.

³ John, v. 22; Matt. xxviii. 18.

at his resurrection from the dead, whereby God publicly owned, declared, and confirmed him to be as the Saviour, so also the judge of mankind. This being one great end of his being raised again, 'that we may all appear before his judgment-seat, and there receive according to 'what we have done in the flesh, whether it be good or evil.'¹

And this certainly is no small comfort to them who believe in Christ, that they shall give up their accounts at the last day to him in whom they believe; that he who is now their advocate, shall be then our judge; for then we may be confident, that we shall have all the favour showed us, that either the law or gospel can allow of. Neither can we doubt but that all the promises which he made us when he was upou earth, will be exactly fulfilled by him when he sits upon his throne. Hath he promised that those 'that come to him he will in no wise cast him out?'² Then we need not fear being rejected by him to eternity, if we do but come unto him in time. Hath he promised that they who believe in him, 'shall never perish, but have everlasting life'³ Then be sure he will make it good at that day; so that no one person that ever did, or ever shall believe aright in him, but shall then be saved by him from ruin and destruction. Hath he promised that he will place all his faithful disciples, all real saints, as sheep at his right hand, and say to them, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!'⁴ 'Hath he said it, and will he not perform it?' Yes, doubt-

¹ 2 Cor. v. 10.

³ John, iii. 16.

² John, vi. 37.

⁴ Matt. xxv. 34.

less, they that are truly such, will as certainly hear that blessed sentence pronounced upon themselves at the last day, as ever it was pronounced by him before. In short, hath he promised to prepare a place for us, and to receive us to himself, 'that where he is, there we may be also?' Then we need not, we cannot question but that the place will be ready for us, and that we shall live with him for ever. The consideration whereof cannot surely but make our hearts even leap with joy, and fill our mouths with nothing but praise and thankfulness this day to almighty God for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the great foundation of all these our hopes and expectations from him. Especially considering that not only our souls, but our bodies too, and so our whole man, will be at that day advanced to the highest glory they are capable of: for as Christ is risen from the dead, 'so he is become the first fruits of them that slept,' which is the other thing to be considered in the words, even that

II. Christ being risen from the dead,' thereby 'became the first fruits of them that slept.' For the understanding whereof, we must know, that the apostle is here proving that our bodies shall rise again at the last day, and he proves it from this argument, because Christ rose again. 'Now,' saith he, 'if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead?' And then having prosecuted the argument, by showing how many absurdities would follow upon the denial of Christ's resurrection, he concludes it with these words, 'But now is

¹ John, xiv. 2, 3.

² 1 Cor. xv. 12.

Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept; ¹ that is, Christ's resurrection is a plain and undeniable argument, that we also, who sleep or die, shall rise again; for as the same apostle elsewhere observes, 'If the first fruit be holy, the whole lump also is holy.'¹ So here, 'Christ is the first fruits of them that slept,' so that he rising again, all others must needs rise too. In the same sense he is elsewhere called, 'the beginning, and the first begotten from the dead.'² Not but that there were severall raised from the dead before, as some in the Old Testament, and some by him in the New, as Lazarus and the widow's son at Naim; but these rose so as to die again; whereas Christ was raised to an immortal life, so as never to die more; and he was the first that ever did so; and whosoever do so, as all shall at the last day, they do it by virtue of his resurrection.

For as the apostle argues in the following words, 'Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead: for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' All mankind being contained in Adam, when he fell, all fell in him; and so the whole human nature being contained in Christ, when he rose, all rose with him, at least virtually and potentially. So that by virtue and power of his rising from the dead in our nature, all that partake of that nature in which he did it, shall rise again too, and therefore he is called the second Adam: one by whom all mankind shall be raised from

¹ Rom. xi. 16.

² Col. i. 18. Rev. i. 5.

that death to which they were made subject by the first. The first Adam died, and therefore we must die too. The second Adam rose again, and therefore we shall rise again too. So that Christ's resurrection is not only a proof, but the cause of ours; and we shall as certainly rise again, as Christ ever did so, and because he did so. In which respect, Christ's resurrection affords us as great matter of joy and comfort as any we have hitherto mentioned; as appears from the matter, the manner, and the end of our resurrection, which I shall briefly explain unto you.

1. As for the matter, it is plain that the same bodies that die, shall rise again. As our Saviour's body was the same after his resurrection, that it was before and at his passion, of the same stature, the same proportion, the same features, the same substance every way, so it will be with us. The same bodies out of which our souls depart when we die, shall be raised to life again at the resurrection; for otherwise, if there should be any change of the substance, it could not be properly called a resurrection; our bodies cannot be said to rise again, unless they be the same they were before, at least as to the substance; it must be the same flesh, the same bones, the same nerves and sinews, the same veins and arteries, the same head, the same heart, the same hands and feet, and so as to the other parts of the body, the substance will be the same.

This is that wherewith Job comforted himself in the midst of his troubles, saying, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eye

shall behold and not another.'¹ But this he could never have expected, unless he had been sure that that very flesh and eye which he then had, should be raised again at the latter day, and not another.

But here we must observe, that though the substance of our bodies will be the same as they are now, or as they will be when we die, yet the disposition and qualities of that substance will be much altered; for as the apostle saith, 'It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.'² It is still the same body, but it is now endowed with incorruptible, with glorious, with powerful, and with spiritual qualities. And so, though it be still the same body, yet that body shall be so disposed and ordered, that it shall far exceed that wherein our souls are at present immured; so far, that our bodies shall be then made like to the body of Christ himself; for as the apostle assures us, 'he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.'³

Now who is able to express the comfort that a soul which is truly pious, must needs receive from a firm belief and serious consideration of this, that very body which he now hath, shall not only be raised again, but it shall be made much better than it was before, fashioned like to Christ's body, that is, as pure, as glorious, as spiritual,

¹ Job. xix. 25, 26, 27.

² 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44.

³ Phil. iii. 21.

as it is possible for a body to be. We cannot but all find, by sad and woful experience, that the bodies we now carry about with us, are a great clog and hinderance to us in the performance of all religious duties, and so both in the pursuit and enjoyment of real happiness; and that too, not only when they are in pain or sick, but likewise when we have all outward ease and health that we can desire; for our souls being so closely united to our bodies, that so long as they are in them, they cannot act without them, but in all their operations are forced to make use of the animal spirits in our bodies, which are generally either too gross and heavy, or else irregular and disorderly. Hence it comes to pass that we are commonly very dull and heavy in all religious exercises, or else our imaginations are so disturbed, our passions so unruly, and all our thoughts so desultory and inconstant, that we find it very difficult to fix our minds so as to serve the Lord without distraction; every little humour that ariseth in the body, being apt to discompose the animal spirits, so as to make them unfit for the service of the soul.

And besides that, our bodies, by reason of the several humours which are apt by turns to be predominant in them, do not only impede and hinder us in doing what is good, but excite and stir us up to what is evil and wicked; from hence it is that some are passionate and fretful, others melancholy and dejected. Some are inclined to lust and uncleanness, others to drunkenness and intemperance; which last, is in divers respects, both the effect and the cause of such ill humours arising in the body. Be sure these and many such like sins, though they would not be sins without the soul, yet they would

not be committed without the body ; which therefore is the occasion of a great part of those vices which men are so generally addicted to.

But it will not be so when our bodies are risen again ; for then they will be so nimble and active, so pure and spiritual, so free from all petulant and domineering humours, that they will be perfectly subject to the soul, and obedient to the dictates of reason and religion ; as ready upon all occasions to serve the soul, as the soul shall be to serve God. As the whole shall never be sick or out of tune, so neither will any part of them : our brains will never be clouded, but always serene and clear ; our imaginations will never be disturbed, but shall always represent things to our minds just as they are in themselves. Our passions will never be headstrong and exorbitant, but always shall move regularly towards their proper objects. Our bodies shall there be supported by the almighty power of God, without the use of meat and drink ; and therefore our stomachs shall never be clogged, nor our heads annoyed with their fumes. As we shall be always doing good, we shall never be weary of doing it ; for whatsoever we do, our bodies shall never be discomposed nor out of tune, but we shall always be quick and lively, cheerful and pleasant, fresh as the morning ; continually beholding, praising, and adoring him who rose from the dead, 'and became the first fruits of them that slept.' How comfortable the consideration of this is to all that truly love and fear God, they themselves experience far better than I am able to express.

And it is no small addition to their comfort, to consider also the manner how they shall rise again, even with greater joy and triumph, with greater pomp

and solemnity than any one as yet is able to imagine; for as the holy angels attended our blessed Saviour at his first coming into the world, so they will do it at his second also; for our Lord himself tells us, that when the Son of man shall come again, all the holy angels shall come with him.¹ 'And that he will send them,' his angels, 'with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.'² At the sound therefore of a trumpet blown by the holy angels, so as that it may be heard all the world over, the dust of every body that ever was informed by a rational soul, shall immediately gather up itself again, and haste into the place where it was before, so as to compose the same individual body, and their bodies being thus refitted, the souls of all the elect shall come down from heaven, and be united again to them, so that the same persons that died in the faith of Christ, shall now be raised through his power, to a life immortal, by the ministry of no less nor fewer persons than all the holy angels.

What a joyful day then must this needs be to all those that love Christ's appearing? It is true, it will be a very sad and terrible day indeed to all those that lived and died in their sins; but I speak not now of these, but of such only as live and die sincere members of Christ's body, real and true saints. How pleasant will the trumpet sound, how welcome will this day be to such as these! How will their souls rejoice to meet their old mates their bodies again! What a sweet intercourse and greeting will there be between them! when these

¹ Matt. xxv. 31.² Ib. xxiv. 31.

bodies, which they had mortified and kept under by fasting, and watching, and praying upon earth, shall now be reassumed by them, to partake with them of glory and immortality in heaven! And that for the effecting of this great mystery, God should make use of no less glorious instruments than the holy angels, which continually attend him! This is that which the holy apostle looked upon as matter of extraordinary comfort to all that truly believe in Christ, and obey his gospel; 'for the Lord himself,' saith he, 'shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we be ever with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.'¹

But that which is the greatest comfort of all, is still behind, and that is the end of our resurrection; even that they who believe in Christ upon earth, may live with him in heaven, as the apostle assureth us in those words. I know the souls of all that die in the Lord, will be with him before, but not their bodies, and by consequence not the whole man. But now both soul and body, and so their whole persons, will be advanced to the highest glory, honour, and happiness that creatures are capable of; for there the eye both of our body and mind shall be so enlightened, that we shall be able to see perfectly, and contemplate the whole creation, and that infinite wisdom, power, and goodness which appears in both, in the contrivance

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, 18.

and government of the world. There we shall familiarly converse with the holy angels and glorified saints, which will be our constant companions and fellow-citizens of the new Jerusalem. There we shall behold and enjoy the top of the creation, Christ himself in our own nature united to the divine Person, and so exalted above all creatures; yea, there we shall perfectly behold our Creator himself; whose glory, beauty, excellency, and perfections, shall be so clearly unveiled and discovered to us, that our whole souls shall be transported into flames of love unto him, and continually ravished with ecstasies of joy and pleasure in him.

But what do I mean to speak of these glories which the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, and which the heart of man is not able to conceive? Alas! we poor mortals upon earth, little think what it is to be in heaven; and therefore it is in vain for us to offer at the description of it. Only this we may say in general, that whatsoever can any way conduce to the making either of our souls or bodies happy, shall there be fully, perfectly, eternally enjoyed by all and every one that dies in the true faith and fear of God, after they are risen from the dead.

Having thus considered how many and great advantages accrue to us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that he was thereby declared to be the Messiah and Son of God, that his gospel was thereby established, and our faith confirmed in it, that we are thereby assured that he hath finished our redemption, and made complete satisfaction for all our sins, that he is able to mortify our lusts, and make us holy, and that he is thereby become

‘ the first fruits of them that slept ;’ so that by the means and virtue of his resurrection, we also shall rise again to a life immortal ; hence as we cannot but acknowledge we have cause to do so, so it must needs be our duty to rejoice this day, and to praise and magnify the eternal God for so unspeakable a mercy as this was ; for as the Psalmist saith, ‘ This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day that the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad therein.’¹

Let us therefore, as the apostle saith, ‘ keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.’² Let us keep it, ‘ not with rioting and drunkenness, not with chambering and wantonness, not with strife and envying,’ but with rejoicing and praising God for raising our Saviour from the grave, to turn us from these and all other vices whatsoever.

Neither must we content ourselves with remembering Christ’s resurrection to-day, but as St. Paul gave it in charge to Timothy, saying, ‘ Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel.’³ So say I to you, Remember always that Christ is risen from the dead, that he is gone to heaven, that he is now there at the right hand of God, making intercession for you. And ‘ if ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, and not on things in the earth.’⁴ For where should your hearts be, but where your

¹ Psalm cxviii. 23, 24.

² 2 Tim. ii. 8.

³ 1 Cor. v. viii.

⁴ Col. iii. 1, 2.

treasure is? Where should your affections be, but where your Lord and Saviour is, the best friend, the greatest treasure that you have in the whole world? Let us therefore now bid adieu to all things here below, and go up to live with 'Christ in heaven;' that our hearts may be there now, where we hope both our souls and bodies shall be for ever, in and through him who is risen from the dead, and become 'the first fruits of them that slept.'

SERMON VI.

**CHRIST'S RESURRECTION A PROOF OF
OURS.**

BY BISHOP BEVERIDGE.

S E R M O N V I.

1 CORINTHIANS, xv. 12.

Now, if Christ be preached, that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead?

THAT Jesus Christ, after he was put to death upon the cross, was raised again to life, is not only one of the articles of our Christian faith, but that upon which all the rest are founded; so that take away this, and the others would all fall to the ground, together with all our hopes of pardon and salvation: for as the apostle here observes, ‘If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and our faith is also vain.’¹ Not only in that all that we believe besides, stands upon the same bottom with this, but likewise, because without this we could never attain the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls, that depending upon the intercession which Christ maketh for us in heaven: which he could never have made if he had not risen from the dead; especially that great article, the resurrec-

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 14.

tion of the dead, depends so entirely upon Christ's resurrection, that a man cannot believe the one without the other, and he who believes either, must needs believe both. At least, he that believes that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, cannot but believe that all mankind shall do so, as well as he, he having the same ground for the one as he hath for the other.

Hence, therefore, the apostle in this chapter, being directed by the Spirit of God, to reveal what was necessary to be known and believed concerning the resurrection of the dead in general, he begins with the resurrection of Christ, and the grounds we have to believe that he rose from the dead ; first, from the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, foretelling that Christ should rise from the dead.¹ And then from the testimony of those who had seen him after he was risen, assuring us, that ' he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve, after that, of five hundred brethren at once, after that he was seen of James, then of all the apostles again, and last of all of himself too.'² From whence he takes occasion to show how unworthy he was of so great a favour ; and then he draws this conclusion from what he had thus premised concerning Christ's resurrection, that the dead shall certainly rise again : ' Now,' saith he, ' if Christ be preached, that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead ?'

From whence we may first observe, that there were some in those days that denied it : such were the sect of the Sadducees, who said, ' that there is no resurrection.'³ And such were Hymeneus and Philetus, of whom the same apostle saith, ' that

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.

² Ibid. ver. 5, 6, 7, 8.

³ Matt. xxii. 23 ; Acts, xxiii. 8.

they have erred,' saying, 'that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some.'¹ Where we may observe by the way, that by saying that the resurrection is past already, they overthrew the faith of such as hearkened to them; so that they could have no true faith at all, that being wholly grounded upon the same bottom with our hopes of the resurrection to come, and yet this damnable heresy, which hath been asleep almost ever since the apostle's days, is now received, to our shame be it spoken, in ours: there being a sort of people risen up amongst us, who leaving the good word of God, and following their own corrupt humours and fancies, under the name of the light within them, have been led themselves, and strive to lead others, into this among other most horrid opinions, that strike at the foundation of the Christian religion, for though they profess to believe the resurrection of the dead, yet they understand it not of the body but the soul; when that riseth from the death of sin, to the life of righteousness; and so is in effect the same with regeneration, which being effected in this life, in all that are regenerated, it is past already, and therefore not to be expected hereafter, which plainly overthrows this great article of our faith, the resurrection of the body, and by consequence the faith of all that are so weak and careless of their own salvation, as to suffer themselves to be led blindfold into such pernicious and destructive heresies.

Against such kind of heretics, the apostle here argues, wondering how any can deny the resurrection of the dead, now it is so plain and undeniable

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 18.

that Christ was raised from the dead. 'Now,' if Christ,' saith he, 'be preached, that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead?' He looks upon this as such an invincible argument, that he cannot but admire how any are able to withstand it: and so shall we too, if we do but impartially consider these few things.

For, first, this answers all the reasons that can be alleged against the possibility of it, for which so many have denied that the dead shall rise again to life, even because it seemed, at least to them, altogether impossible, that the soul which is once separated from the body, should be afterwards united to it again; and that the parts of a body that are separated from one another, and reduced perhaps into thousands of atoms, and dispersed in as many various and far distant places, should notwithstanding come together again, every one into its proper place, so as to make up the same body as they did before: but that the soul which is separated from its body may be united to it again, cannot be now doubted of, seeing it was actually done in the resurrection of Christ. For it is a known principle, that what hath been done may be done; but the soul of Christ was reunited to his body, and therefore souls may be united again to their bodies, how long soever they have been separated from them. And if a separate soul or spirit may be united again to its body, much more may the parts of the same body, when separated, be again united together, they being all of the same nature, and having a natural tendency and inclination to the place from whence they came, and being

all under the eye of God, when separated from one another, as much as when they were all joined together in the same body. But it is a certain rule, that he who can do the greater can do the less. And therefore seeing he raised Christ from the dead, no question can be made, but that he can raise us too if he please.

And that he will be pleased to do it, appears also from the resurrection of Christ: for as he died, so he rose again, not in a private, but public capacity: not as a single person only, but as the common head and representative of all mankind, so that we are said 'to be risen with him.'¹ Because our nature in general rose in him, all that partake of that nature must needs do so too, his resurrection being not only a most certain pledge and earnest, but the first fruits of ours, as the apostle here saith, 'Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.'² But as the same apostle elsewhere saith, 'If the first fruits be holy, the lump is also holy.'³ And if he rose as the first fruits, the whole lump or mass of mankind must also rise. And therefore the apostle here adds, 'For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.'⁴ That is, all mankind shall as certainly rise again to life in Christ the second Adam, as they died in the first; and all by virtue of his resurrection from the dead, which therefore is not only the pattern and example, but the cause of ours: and such a cause that it cannot but take

¹ Col. iii. 1.² Rom. xi. 16.³ 1 Cor. xv. 20.⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.

effect. But all men that die shall as certainly rise again, as Christ did so, and because he did so.

Moreover, from the resurrection of Christ we may infallibly conclude that we shall rise again, because he was thereby declared to be the Son of God.¹ For God having declared him to be his Son, by raising him from the dead, he thereby attested and confirmed all that Christ had said or taught; but he through the whole course of his ministry, taught mankind that they should rise again at the last day. 'The hour is coming,' saith he, 'in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.'² And elsewhere he promiseth those that come unto him, 'that he will raise them up at the last day;'³ 'and that they shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.'⁴ And when the Sadducees, which denied the resurrection, propounded a question to him about it, which they thought to be unanswerable, he did not only convince them of their ignorance and error, but demonstrated to them out of the writings of Moses himself, that the dead shall rise again, 'Now,' saith he, 'that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush when he called the Lord, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; for he is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto him.'⁵ Which argument was so plain and evident to them, that they had not a word to say against it. Seeing, therefore, Christ

¹ Rom. i. 4.

² John, vi. 39, 40.

³ John, vi. 40, 44.

⁴ Luke, xii. 14.

⁵ Luke, xx. 37, 38.

thus effectually taught and proved that the dead shall rise again, and seeing God by raising him from the dead, declared that he was his Son, and by consequence, that whatsoever he had taught was true, therefore whosoever believeth that Christ was raised from the dead, must of necessity believe that all shall be so at the last day.

The same thing appears also from the end of his resurrection, for to this end Christ both died and rose and revived, 'that he might be Lord both of the dead and living;' — 'that he might exercise supreme authority and dominion over all,' as he will at the last day, when, as it there follows, 'we shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.'¹ Which we are likewise fully assured of by his resurrection from the dead, as we learn from the same apostle, saying, 'that God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, even Jesus Christ, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.'²

From whence it is evident, that he was therefore raised again, that he might judge both the dead and the living, and that we are thereby also assured by God himself, that he will do it, but that he cannot do, unless the dead be raised again to life; for so long as their bodies continue in the grave, or in a state of separation from their souls, they are not in being as men, and so not capable of appearing as such before him: and therefore unless the bodies of all men that ever died, should be raised again and their souls reunited to them, so as to be all made alive again as they were before, Christ would

¹ Rom. xiv. 9, ¹⁰.

² Acts, xvii. 31.

lose the end of his resurrection, as well as of all things else he did for mankind: but there is no fear of that; God doth nothing in vain, but always attains the end he aims at in what he doth. Seeing Christ rose again that he might be the judge both of quick and dead, he will most certainly raise up the dead again, and summon them all together, with such as shall be then living, to appear before his judgment-seat; or rather, he will raise them up, by his summoning them to come before him; for he will summon them by the sound of a trumpet, blown by an archangel, so as to be heard all the world over.¹ And the trumpet shall no sooner sound, but the dead shall be raised, and they who are then living shall be changed.² 'And then we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.'³ And therefore the apostle might well say, as he doth in my text to the Corinthians, 'If Christ be preached, that he rose from the dead. how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead.'

I hope this cannot be said of any here present, for that you all believe and are fully persuaded, that the dead shall rise again: but howsoever, to confirm your faith in this fundamental article of the Christian religion, waving all other arguments that might be produced for it, I have briefly shown how necessarily it follows upon the resurrection of Christ, so that no man can believe that Christ rose from the dead the third day, but he must of neces-

¹ Thess. iv. 16.

² 1 Cor. xv. 52.

³ 2 Cor. v. 10.

sity believe also that all men shall rise again at the last; wherefore as ye believe the one, ye must never doubt of the other, but be fully persuaded in your minds, that as certainly as you shall ever die, you shall as certainly live again; that although your souls shall be separated from your bodies, and continue so for some time, perhaps for many years, yet at last they shall return unto them, so that you shall then live again, as really as you are now alive.

And do not trouble your heads about the way and manner, how this great work shall be effected; as he did whom this apostle in this chapter speaks of, saying, 'But some man will say, How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?' To whom he gives this sharp answer, 'Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die, and that which thou sowest thou sowest not that body which shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or some other grain, but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.'¹ Where we may first observe, that the apostle calls him fool for asking such a silly question: 'Thou fool,' saith he, intimating that it is a great piece of folly and madness, for people to concern themselves about any thing but what is necessary for them to know and believe, concerning this or any other article of our Christian faith, but that we should rest contented with what is plainly revealed. And then we may also observe that he acquaints us here with all that is necessary for us to know in this matter, under the similitude of a grain or any seed sown in the ground, which first

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 35—38.

rots or dies there, and then riseth up again, not barely as it was sown, but with a stalk, an ear, or husk, or what else is proper for it, and God (for it is still his work) he gives to every seed its own body; as if wheat be sown, there comes up wheat, if barley, there comes up barley again; so here when our bodies are dead and rotted in the earth or sea, or any where else, Almighty God, when he sees good, causeth them to rise up again, giving to every man his own body: that body out of which his soul departed, shall be raised up again, and the same soul that departed from it shall be restored and united again to it; and so the same man that died, shall live again in the same body in which he died. As our Saviour's body which rose, was the same that he suffered in upon the cross, so that they who knew him before knew him again after he was risen; which they could not have done, if his body had not been of the same proportion, features, and lineaments which they had before observed in him; and to put it beyond all dispute that it was the same, he showed them the prints which the nails had made in his hands and feet, and which the spear had made in his side, which was the clearest evidence that could be given, that it was the very same body that had been nailed to the cross, and out of which his soul there departed. And as his was, so every man's body when it is raised up shall be the same it was at the time when he died; the same that dies shall rise again, and we shall be the same men or women then that we are now, and every one may say, as Job did long ago, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy

this body, yet in my flesh (this very flesh of mine which I now have) shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes (these very eyes) shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.¹

But here we must further observe, that the apostle, speaking of the resurrection of the just, saith, 'It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.'² Though it be still a body, and the very same body that it was before, as to the substance of it, (for otherwise it would not be properly a resurrection,) yet the qualities of it shall be much altered; it shall now be an incorruptible, a glorious, a powerful, a spiritual body: a body still, but endued with such spiritual qualities, that it shall be as active, as nimble, as tractable every way, as obedient to the will and motions of the soul, as if itself also was a spirit; for it shall then be raised to the highest degree of purity, glory, and perfection that matter is capable of, being made as like as it is possible to the body of Christ himself, who, as this apostle tells us, 'shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.'³ And therefore, as he now doth, so shall 'the righteous then shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.'⁴

Having thus briefly shown what ground we have to believe that we shall rise again, in that our Sa-

¹ Job. xix. 25, 26, 27.

³ Phil. iii. 21.

² 1 Cor. xv. 42, 44.

⁴ Matt. xiii. 43.

viour did so, and what we ought to believe concerning this great fundamental article of our religion, as it is revealed in God's holy word, I shall just mention some of the great uses that are to be made of this doctrine. First, therefore, ye may hence learn, whensoever you remember your Saviour's resurrection, to think likewise of your own, and consider that as certainly as he rose again from the dead, so shall you too; that although your bodies shall return to the earth out of which they were taken, and perhaps lie there in dust for many years together, yet they shall one day be raised up and quickened, so as to live again as really as we are now alive; and that as Christ therefore rose again that he might be judge both of quick and dead, so you shall rise again that you may be judged by him, and either advanced to eternal glory or condemned to everlasting punishment, according as you have or have not believed in him and obeyed him, while you lived upon the earth; which I heartily wish you would not only believe, as I hope you all do, in general, but that ye would live with a constant sense of it upon your minds, so as to be always thinking with yourselves, that ye hear the trumpet sounding in your ears, 'Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment!' for ye will one day as certainly hear it, as ye are now in this place and hear me speak.

From hence we may also see, how much it concerns you all to take care how ye now live in the body. If ye were to die like beasts, ye might live like beasts: if ye had no other world to live in but this, it would be no great matter how ye lived in it; but seeing that when your souls leave their bodies, they still live without them, as really as

they lived before in them, and seeing at the last day your bodies also will be raised again, so that you shall then live in them again as ye now do, and that too not only for some time but to all eternity, either in a state of perfect joy and happiness, or else of extreme misery and torment, according as ye lived here in obedience or disobedience to the commandments of God your Maker; if ye firmly believe this, as ye ought to do, you cannot but be sensible how much it behoves you to endeavour all ye can, to live in the true faith and fear of God whilst you are in this world, that so ye may live happily in the next; which, blessed be God, ye may all do if ye will but take care and pains about it, such as a matter of so great consequence requires; for ye have an Almighty Saviour, the only begotten Son of God, who having been delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification, is now the propitiation for our sins, and the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him, which I therefore heartily wish you would all do.

Strive all ye can to live for the future, in sincere obedience to all that he hath taught and commanded, and then you will find, by your own experience, that he will not only direct and assist you in doing his will all the while you live in this world, but at the last day he will raise you up to life everlasting, that ye may live with him, his saints and angels in perfect joy and bliss for ever.

Lastly, from what ye have now heard, you may learn what infinite cause ye have to thank God for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as upon many other accounts, so particularly for that ye are thereby assured, that your bodies shall not always lie rotting in the grave, nor be scattered about in

dust and atoms, but that they shall one day be raised to life again; and that if ye now fight the good fight, finish your course, and keep the faith, there is laid up for you a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge, shall give you at that day; and not to you only, but to all them that love his appearing.'¹ 'For when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;'² and ever live with him, who liveth with the Father and Holy Ghost, one God blessed for ever.

¹ 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

² 1 John, iii. 2.

SERMON VII.
CHRIST'S TRIUMPH IN THE RESUR-
RECTION.

BY DR. DONNE.

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[JOHN DONNE, born 1573, was made Dean of St. Paul's in 1621.
and died in 1631.]

S E R M O N V I I.

ACTS, II. 36.

*Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly,
that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have
crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

THE first word of the text must be the last part of the sermon—‘therefore;’ therefore let all know it. Here is something necessary to be known, and the means by which we are to know it; and these will be our two parts; *scientia, et modus*, knowledge, and the way to it; for, *qui testatur de scientia, testatur de modo scientiæ*, is a good rule in all laws, he that will testify any thing upon his knowledge, must declare how he came by that knowledge. So then, what we must conclude, and upon what premises, what we must resolve, and what must lead us to that resolution, are our two stages, our two resting places: and to those two our several steps are these: in the first, ‘Let all the house of Israel know,’ &c. we shall consider first, the manner of St. Peter, (for the text is part of a sermon of St. Peter’s,) in imprinting this knowledge on his auditory; which is, first, in that compellation of love

and honour, *domus Israel*, 'the house of Israel:' but yet, when he hath raised them to a sense of their dignity, in that attribute, he doth not pamper them with an over value of them; he lets them know their worst as well as their best:—though you be the house of Israel, yet it is you that have crucified Christ Jesus; 'that Jesus, whom ye have crucified;' and from this his manner of preparing them, we shall pass to the matter that he proposes to them: when he had remembered them what God had done for them, 'You are the house of Israel,' and what they had done against God, 'You have crucified that Jesus.' He imparts a blessed message to them all, 'Let all know it:' let them know it, and know it assuredly; he exhibits it to their reason, to their natural understanding: and what? The greatest mystery, the entire mystery of our salvation, 'that that Jesus is both Lord, and Christ;' but he is made so—made so by God—made both—made Christ; that is, anointed, embalmed, preserved from corruption, even in the grave, and made Lord by his triumph, and by being made head of the church, in the resurrection, and in the ascension: and so, that which is the last step of our first stage, 'that that Jesus is made Lord, as well as he is made Christ,' enters us upon our second stage, the means by which we are to know, and prove all this to ourselves; 'therefore,' says the text, 'let all know it:' wherefore? Why, because God hath raised him, after you had crucified him; because 'God hath loosed the bands of death, because it was impossible that he should be holden by death;'¹ because David's prophecy of a

¹ Acts, ii. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27.

deliverance from the grave is fulfilled in him; therefore let all know this to be thus. So that the resurrection of Christ is argument enough to prove, that Christ is made Lord of all; and if he be Lord, he hath subjects, that do as he does; and so his resurrection is become an argument, and an assurance of our resurrection too; and that is as far as we shall go in our second part, that first Christ's resurrection is proof enough to us of his dominion,—if he be risen, he is Lord; and then his dominion is proof enough to us of our resurrection, if he be Lord, Lord of us, we shall rise too: and when we have paced and passed through all these steps, we shall in some measure have solemnized this day of the resurrection of Christ; and in some measure have made it the day of our resurrection too.

I. First, then, the apostle applies himself to his auditory, in a fair, in a gentle manner; he gives them their titles, *domus Israel*, 'the house of Israel.' We have a word now denizenized, and brought into familiar use amongst us—compliment; and for the most part, in an ill sense; so it is, when the heart of the speaker doth not answer his tongue; but God forbid but a true heart and a fair tongue might very well consist together: as virtue itself receives an addition by being in a fair body, so do good intentions of the heart, by being expressed in fair language. That man aggravates his condemnation that gives me good words, and means ill; but he gives me a rich jewel, and in a fair cabinet, he gives me precious wine, and in a clean glass, that intends well, and expresses his good intentions well too. If I believe a fair speaker, I have comfort a little while, though he deceive me; but a froward and peremptory refuser, unsaddles me at first. I

remember a vulgar Spanish author, who wrote the *Josephina*, the life of Joseph, the husband of the blessed Virgin Mary, who moving that question, why the virgin is never called by any style of majesty or honour in the Scriptures, says, that if after the declaring of her to be the mother of God, he had added any other title, the Holy Ghost had not been a good courtier, (as his very word is,) nor exercised in good language, and he thinks that had been a defect in the Holy Ghost himself. He means surely the same that Epiphanius doth, that in naming the saints of God, and especially the blessed Virgin, we should always give them the best titles that are appliable to them; *quis unquam ausus*, says he, *proferre nomen Mariæ, et non statim addidit virgo?*¹ "Whoever durst utter the name of that Mary, without that addition of incomparable honour, The Virgin Mary?"

That Spanish author need not be suspicious of the Holy Ghost in that kind, that he is no good courtier so; for in all the books of the world, you shall never read so civil language, nor so fair expressions of themselves to one another, as in the Bible: when Abraham shall call himself dust and ashes, (and indeed if the Son of God were a worm, and no man, what was Abraham?) If God shall call this Abraham, this dust, this worm of the dust, 'the friend of God;' (and all friendship implies a parity, an equality in something;) when David shall call himself 'a flea, and a dead dog,' even in respect of Saul, and God shall call David, 'a man according to his own heart,' when God shall call

¹ Epiphan. Hæres. lxxviii.

us, 'the apple of his own eye, the seal upon his own right hand,' who would go further, for an example, or further than that example for a rule, of fair accesses, of civil approaches, or sweet and honourable entrances into the affections of them with whom they were to deal? Especially is this manner necessary in men of our profession; 'Not to break a bruised reed, nor to quench smoking flax;' not to avert any, from a will to hear, by any forwardness, any morosity, and defrauding them of their due praise and due titles; but to accompany this blessed apostle, in this way of his discreet, and religious insinuation, to call them 'men of Judea,' and 'men of Israel,' and 'men and brethren,'¹ and here *domus Israel*, the ancientest house, the honourablest house, the lastingest house in the world, 'the house of Israel.'

He takes from them nothing that is due, that would but exasperate: he is civil, but his civility doth not amount to a flattery, as though the cause of God needed them, or God must be beholden to them, or God must pay for it, or smart for it, if they were not pleased. And therefore, though he do give them their titles, *apertè illis imputat crucifixionem Christi*, says St. Chrysostom; plainly and without disguise he imputes and puts home to them, the crucifying of Christ; how honourably soever they were descended, he lays that murder close to their consciences: 'You, you house of Israel, have crucified the Lord Jesus.' There is a great deal of difference between Shimei's vociferations against David; 'Thou man of blood, thou man of Belial,'² and Nathan's proceeding with David;

¹ Acts, ii. 14, 22, 29.

² 2 Sam. xvi. 7.

and yet Nathan forbore not to tell him, 'Thou art the man;' thou hast despised the Lord—thou hast killed Uriah—thou hast taken his wife. It is one thing to sow pillows under the elbows of kings, (flatterers do so,) another thing to pull the chair from under the king, and popular and seditious men do so. When inferiors insult over their superiors, we tell them, *Christi domini*, they are the Lord's anointed, and the Lord hath said, 'Touch not mine anointed;' and when such superiors insult over the Lord himself, and think themselves gods without limitation, as the God of heaven is, when they do so, we must tell them they do so, *etsi Christi domini*, though you be the Lord's anointed, yet you crucify the anointed Lord; for this was St. Peter's method, though his successor will not be bound by it.

When he hath carried the matter thus evenly between them, I do not deny, but you are the house of Israel, you cannot deny but you have crucified the Lord Jesus; you are heirs of a great deal of honour, but you are guilty of a shrewd fault too, stand or fall to your Master, your Master hath dealt thus mercifully with you all, that to you all, all, he sends a message, *Sciant omnes*, 'Let all the house of Israel know this.' Needs the house of Israel know any thing? Needs there any learning in 'persons of honour? We know, this characterizes, this distinguishes some whole nations. In one nation it is almost a scorn for a gentleman to be learned; in another almost every gentleman, is conveniently, and in some measure, learned. But I enlarge not myself; I pretend not to compre-

hend national virtues, or national vices. For this knowledge, which is proclaimed here, which is, the knowledge that the true Messias is come, and that there is no other to be expected, is such a knowledge, as that even the house of Israel itself is without a foundation, if it be without this knowledge. Is there any house that needs no reparations? Is there a house of Israel, (let it be the library, the depository of the oracles of God, a true church, that hath the true word of the true God, let it be the house fed with manna, that hath the true administration of the true sacraments of Christ Jesus,) is there any such house, that needs not a further knowledge, that there are always thieves about that house, that would rob us of that word, and of those sacraments?

The Holy Ghost is a dove, and the dove couples, pairs, is not alone. Take heed of singular, of schismatical opinions; and what is more singular, more schismatical, than when all religion is confined in one man's breast? The dove is *animal sociale*, a sociable creature, and not singular; and the Holy Ghost is that. And Christ is a sheep, *animal gregale*, they flock together. Embrace thou those truths, which the whole flock of Christ Jesus, the whole Christian, hath from the beginning acknowledged to be truths, and truths necessary to salvation; for, for other traditional, and conditional, and occasional, and collateral, and circumstantial points; for almanack divinity, that changes with the season, with the time, and meridional divinity, calculated to the height of such a place, and lunary divinity, that ebbs and flows, and state divinity, that obeys affections of persons, *Domus Israel*, the true church of God had need of a con-

tinual succession of light, a continual assistance of the Spirit of God, and of her own industry, to know those things that belong to her peace.

And therefore let no church, no man, think that he hath 'done enough, or knows enough. If the devil thought so too, we might the better think so : but since we see, that he is in continual practice against us, let us be in continual diligence and watchfulness, to countermine him. We are *domus Israel*, the house of Israel, and it is a great measure of knowledge that God hath afforded us ; but if every pastor look into his parish, and every master into his own family, and see what is practising there, *sciat domus Israel*, let all our Israel know, that there is more knowledge and more wisdom necessary. Be every man far from calumniating his superiors, for that mercy which is used towards them that are fallen ; but be every man as far from remitting or slackening his diligence, for the preserving of them that are not fallen.

The wisest must know more, though you be *domus Israel*, the house of Israel already ; and then, *et si crucifixistis*, though you have crucified the Lord Jesus you may know it, *sciant omnes*, let all know it. St. Paul says once, ' If they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of life ; ' ¹ but he never says, if they have crucified the Lord of life, they are excluded from knowledge. I mean no more, but that the mercy of God, in manifesting and applying himself to us, is above all our sins. No man knows enough ; what measure of tentations soever he have now, he may have tentations, through which this knowledge and this

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 8.

grace will not carry him ; and therefore he must proceed from grace to grace. So no man hath sinned so deeply, but that God offers himself to him yet ; *Sciant omnes*, the wisest man hath ever something to learn, he must not presume ; the sin-fullest man hath God ever ready to teach him, he must not despair.

Now the universality of this mercy, hath God enlarged, and extended very far, in that he proposes it, even to our knowledge, *Sciant*, let all know it. It is not only *credant*, let all believe it ; for the infusing of faith, is not in our power ; but God hath put it in our power to satisfy their reason, and to chase that wax, to which he himself vouchsafes to set the great seal of faith. And that St. Jerome takes to be most properly his commission : *Tentemus animas, quæ deficiunt a fide, naturalibus rationibus adjuvare* ; Let us endeavour to assist them, who are weak in faith, with the strength of reason. And truly it is very well worthy of a serious consideration, that whereas all the articles of our creed are objects of faith, so as that we are bound to receive them *de fide*, as matters of faith, yet God hath left that, out of which all these articles are to be deduced and proved, (that is, the Scripture,) to human arguments. It is not an article of the creed, to believe these, and these books, to be or not to be canonical Scripture ; but our arguments* for the Scripture are human arguments, proportioned to the reason of a natural man. God does not seal in water, in the fluid and transitory imaginations, and opinions of men ; we never set the seal of faith to them ; but in wax, in the rectified reason of man, that reason that is ductile, and flexible, and pliant to the impressions that are naturally proportioned

unto it, God sets his seal of faith. They are not continual, but they are contiguous; they flow not from one another, but they touch one another; they are not both of a piece, but they enwrap one another—faith and reason. Faith itself, by the prophet Isaiah, is called knowledge. ‘By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many,’ says God of Christ; that is, by that knowledge that men shall have of him. So Zacharias expresses it at the circumcision of John Baptist, ‘that he was to give knowledge of salvation, for the remission of sins.’²

As therefore it is not enough for us, in our profession to tell you, *Qui non crediderit, damnabitur*, “Except you believe all this, you shall be damned,” without we execute that commission before, *Itē prædicatē*, go and preach, work upon their affections, satisfy their reason; so it is not enough for you, to rest in an imaginary faith, and easiness in believing, except you know also what, and why, and how you come to that belief. Implicit believers, ignorant believers, the adversary may swallow; but the understanding believer, he must chew, and pick bones, before he come to assimilate him, and make him like himself. The implicit believer stands in an open field, and the enemy will ride over him easily; the understanding believer, is in a fenced town, and he hath out-works to lose, before the town be pressed; that is, reasons to be answered, before his faith be shaken, and he will sell himself dear, and lose himself by inches, if he be sold or lost at last; and therefore *sciant omnes*, let all men know, that is, endeavour to inform themselves,—to understand.

¹ Isaiah, liii. 11.

² Luke, i. 77.

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 'That particular, that general particular, (if we may so say, for it includes all,) which all were to know, is, that the same Jesus, whom they crucified, was exalted above them all.

Suppose an impossibility; (St. Paul[†] does so, when he says to the Galatians, 'If an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel; for that is impossible.) If we could have been in paradise, and seen God take a clod of red earth, and make that wretched clod of contemptible earth, such a body as should be fit to receive his breath, an immortal soul—fit to be the house of the second person in the Trinity, for God the Son to dwell in bodily,—fit to be the temple for the third person, for the Holy Ghost, should we not have wondered more than at the production of all other creatures? It is more, that the same Jesus, whom they had crucified, is exalted thus, to sit in that despised flesh, at the right hand of our glorious God; that all their spitting should but macerate him, and dissolve him to a better mould, a better plaster; that all their buffetings should but knead him, and press him into a better form; that all their scoffs and contumelies should be prophecies; that that *Ecce rex*, 'Behold your king;' and that *Rex Judæorum*, 'This is the king of the Jews,' which words, they who spoke them, thought to be lies, in their own mouths, should become truths, and he be truly the King, not of the Jews only, but of all nations too; that their nailing him upon the cross, should be a settling of him upon an everlasting throne; and their lifting him up upon the cross, a waiting upon him so far upon his way to heaven: that this Jesus, whom they had thus evacuated, thus crucified, should be thus exalted, was a sub-

ject of infinite admiration, but mixed with infinite confusion too.

Wretched blasphemer of the name of Jesus, that Jesus, whom thou crucifiest, and treadest under thy feet in that oath, is thus exalted. Unclean adulterer, that Jesus, whom thou crucifiest, in stretching out those forbidden arms in a strange bed, thou that beheadest thyself, castest off thy head, Christ Jesus, that thou mightest make thy body the body of a harlot, that Jesus, whom thou defilest there, is exalted. Let several sinners pass this through their several sins, and remember with wonder, but with confusion too, that that Jesus, whom they have crucified, is exalted above all.

How far exalted? Three steps, which carry him above St. Paul's third heaven: he is Lord, and he is Christ, and he is made so by God; God hath made him both Lord and Christ. We return up these steps as they lie, and take the lowest first: *fecit Deus*, God made him so: nature did not make him so; no, not if we consider him in that nature, wherein he consists of two natures, God and man. We place in the school (for the most part) the infinite merit of Christ Jesus, (that his one act of dying once, should be a sufficient satisfaction to God, in his justice, for all the sins of all men,) we place it, I say, rather *in pacto*, than *in persona*; rather that this contract was thus made between the Father and the Son, than that, whatsoever that person, thus consisting of God and man, should do, should, only in respect of the person, be of an infinite value and extention to that purpose; for then, any act of his, his incarnation, his circumcision, any had been sufficient for our redemption, without his death. But *fecit Deus*, God made him

that that he is; the contract between the Father and him, that all that he did should be done so, and to that purpose, that way, and, to that end; this is that that hath exalted him, and us in him.

If, then, not the subtlety and curiosity, but the wisdom of the school, and of the church of God, have justly found it most commodious to place all the mysteries of our religion *in pacto*, rather than *in persona*, in the covenant, rather than in the person, though a person of incomprehensible value; let us also, in applying to ourselves those mysteries of our religion, still *adhærere pactis*, and not *personis*; still rely upon the covenant of God with man, revealed in his word, and not upon the person of any man: not upon the persons of martyrs, as if they had done more than they needed for themselves, and might relieve us with their supererogations; for, if they may work for us, they may believe for us; and *justus fide sua vivet*, says the prophet, 'The righteous shall live by his own faith.' Not upon that person who hath made himself supernumerary and a controller upon the three persons in the Trinity, the bishop of Rome; not upon the consideration of accidents upon persons, when God suffers some to fall, who would have advanced his cause, and some to be advanced, who would have thrown down his cause; but let us ever dwell *in pacto*, and in the *fecit Deus*; this covenant God hath made in his word, and in this we rest.

It is God then, not nature, not his nature that made him. And what? Christ, Christ is anointed: and then, Mary Magdalen made him Christ, for she anointed him before his death; and Joseph of

Arimathea made him Christ, for he anointed him, and embalmed him after his death. But her anointing before kept him not from death; nor would his anointing after have kept him from putrefaction in the grave, if God had not in a far other manner made him Christ, unointed him *præ consortibus*, above his fellows. God hath anointed him, embalmed him, enwrapped him in the leaves of the prophets, that his flesh should not see corruption in the grave; that the flames of hell should not take hold of him, nor singe him there; so anointed him, as that, in his human nature, "He is ascended into heaven, and set down at the right hand of God:" for, *de eo quod ex Maria est, Petrus loquitur*, says St. Basil; that making of him Christ, that is, that anointing which St. Peter speaks of in this place, is the dignifying of his human nature, that was anointed, that was consecrated, that was glorified in heaven.

But he had a higher step than that; God made this Jesus Christ, and he made him Lord; he brought him to heaven in his own person, in his human nature; so he shall all us: but when we shall be all there, he only shall be Lord of all. And if there should be no other bodies in heaven than his, yet, yet now he is Lord of all, as he is head of the church. 'Ask of me,' says his Father, 'and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.'¹ And, as it is added, 'I have set my King upon my holy hill of Sion;'² so he hath made him Lord, head of the Jews and of the Gentiles too, of Sion and of the nations also; he hath consecrated

¹ Psalm ii. 8.

² Ib. ver. 6.

his person, raised his human nature to the glorious region of blessed spirits, to heaven; and he hath dignified him with an office, made him Lord, head of the church, not only of Jews and Gentiles upon earth, but of the militant and triumphant church too.

II. Our two general parts were *scientia et modus*, what we must all know, and by what we must know it. Our knowledge is this exaltation of Jesus; and our means is implied in the first word of the text, 'therefore;' therefore because he is raised from the dead; for to that resurrection, expressed in three or four several phrases before the text, is this text and this exaltation referred. Christ was delivered for our sins, raised for our justification, and upon that depends all. Christ's descending into hell and his resurrection, in our creed, make but one article, and in our creed we believe them both alike: *quis nisi infidelis negaverit, apud inferos fuisse Christum?* says St. Augustine. "Who but an infidel will deny Christ's descending into hell?" and if we believe that to be a limb of the article of the resurrection, his descent into hell must rather be a commencement of his triumph, than a consummation of his exinanition; the first step of his exaltation there, rather than the last step of his passion upon the cross: but the declaration, the manifestation, that which admits no disputation, was his resurrection. *Factus, id est, declaratus per resurrectionem*, says St. Cyril; He was made Christ and Lord, that is, declared evidently to be so, by his resurrection: as there is the like phrase in St. Paul, 'God hath made the wisdom of this world foolishness,'¹ that is, declared

¹ 1 Cor. i. 20.

it to be so. And therefore, it is imputed to be a crucifying of the Lord Jesus again;¹ *non credere eum, post mortem, immortalem*; not to believe, that now, after his having overcome death in his resurrection, he is in an immortal and in a glorious state in heaven. For, when the apostle argues thus, 'If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching in vain, and your faith in vain,'² he implies the contrary too; if you believe the resurrection, we have preached to good purpose: *mortuum esse Christum, pagani credunt; resurrexisse propria fides Christianorum.*³ "The heathen confess Christ's death; to believe his resurrection, is the proper character of a Christian;" for the first stone of the Christian faith was laid in this article of the resurrection. In the resurrection only was the first promise performed, *ipse conferet*, 'he shall bruise the serpent's head;' for, in this, he triumphed over death and hell; and the last stone of our faith is laid in the same article too, that is, the day of judgment: of a day of judgment God hath given an assurance unto all men, (says St. Paul at Athens) 'in that he hath raised Christ Jesus from the dead.'⁴ In this Christ makes up his circle; in this he is truly *alpha* and *omega*, his coming in paradise in a promise, his coming to judgment in the clouds, are tied together in the resurrection; and therefore all the gospel, all our preaching, is contracted to that one text, 'to bear witness of the resurrection;' only for that was there need of a new apostle; 'There was a necessity of one to be chosen in Judas's room, to be a witness of the resurrection:'⁵ *Non ait cate-*

Heb. vi. 6.

² 1 Cor. xv. 14.

³ August.

⁴ Acts, xvii. 31.

⁵ Ibid. i. 22.

rorum, sed tantum resurrectionis, says St. Chrysostom. He does not say, to bear witness of the other articles, but only of the resurrection; he charges him with no more instructions; he needs no more in his commission, but to preach the resurrection; for in that, *trophæum de morte excitavit, et indubitatum reddidit corruptionem deletam*.¹ Here is a retreat from the whole warfare; here is a trophy erected upon the last enemy; 'the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death;' and here is the death of that enemy in the resurrection.

And therefore, to all those who importuned him for a sign, Christ still turns upon the resurrection. The Jews pressed him in general, *Quod signum?* 'What sign showest thou unto us?' and he answers, 'Destroy this temple,' (this body,) 'and in three days I will raise it.'² In another place, the Scribes and Pharisees join, 'Master, we would see a sign from thee;' and he tells them, 'There shall be no sign, but the sign of the prophet Jonas;'³ who was a type of the resurrection. And then the Pharisees and Sadducees join. Now they were bitter enemies to one another; but, as Tertullian says, *Semper inter duos latronis crucifixus Christus*, "it was always Christ's case to be crucified between two thieves." So these, though enemies, join in this vexation; they ask a sign, as the rest, and, as to the rest, Christ gives that answer of Jonas. So that Christ himself determines all, sums up all in this one article, the resurrection.

Now, if the resurrection of this Jesus have made him not only Christ, anointed and consecrated in heaven, in his own person, but made him Lord,

¹ Athan.² John, ii. 18, 19.³ Matt. xii. 38, 39.

then he hath subjects, upon whom that dominion and that power works, and so we have assurance of a resurrection in him too. That he is made Lord of us by his resurrection, 'is rooted in prophecy; 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him,' says the prophet Isaiah; 'but he shall see his seed, and he shall prolong his days;'¹ that is, he shall see those that are regenerate in him, live with him for ever. It is rooted in prophecy, and it spreads forth in the gospel. 'To this end,' says the apostle, 'Christ died and rose, that he might be Lord of the dead and of the living.'² Now, what kind of Lord, if he had no subjects? *Cum videmus caput super aquas;*³ "when the head is above water, will any imagine the body to be drowned?" What a perverse consideration were it, to imagine a live head and dead members? Or, consider our bodies in 'ourselves, and our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost; and shall the temples of the Holy Ghost lie for ever, for ever, buried in their rubbish? They shall not; for the day of judgment is the day of regeneration, as it is called in the gospel;⁴ *Quia caro nostra ita generabitur per incorruptionem, sicut anima per fidem:*⁵ "because our body shall be regenerated by glory there, as our souls are by faith here." Therefore Tertullian calls the resurrection *exemplum spei nostræ*, the original, out of which we copy out our hope; and *clavem sepulchrorum nostrorum*; how hard soever my grave be locked, yet with that key, with the application of the resurrection of Christ Jesus, it will open; and they are all names which express this well, which

¹ Isaiah, liii. 10.² Rom. xiv. 9.³ Gregor.⁴ Matt. xix. 28.⁵ August.

Tertullian gives Christ, *Vadem, obsidem, fide jussorem resurrectionis nostræ*, that he is the pledge, the hostage, the surety of our resurrection: so doth that also which is said in the school, *Sicut Adam forma morientium, ita Christus forma resurgentium*; ¹ "Without Adam there had been no such thing as death; without Christ, no such thing as a resurrection:" but *ascendit ille effractor*, (as the prophet speaks,) 'The breaker is gone up before, and they have passed through the gate;' ² that is, assuredly, infallably, they shall pass.

But what needs all this heat, all this animosity, all this vehemence about the resurrection. May not man be happy enough in heaven, though his body never come thither? Upon what will ye ground the resurrection? Upon the omnipotence of God? *Asylum hæreticorum est, omnipotentia Dei*, (which was well said, and often repeated amongst the ancients,) "the omnipotence of God hath always been the sanctuary of heretics," that is, always their refuge in all their incredible doctrines,—God is able to do it, can do it. You confess the resurrection is a miracle; and miracles are not to be multiplied nor imagined without necessity; and what necessity of bodies in heaven?

Beloved, we make the ground and foundation of the resurrection to be, not merely the omnipotency of God, for God will not do all that he can do; but the ground is, *Omnipotens voluntas Dei revelata*, "the almighty will of God revealed by him to us:" and therefore Christ joins both these together, *erratis*, 'Ye err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God;' ³ that is, not

¹ Theoph.

² Mich. ii. 13.

³ Matt. xxii. 29.

considering the power of God, as it is revealed in the Scriptures: for there is our foundation of this doctrine; we know out of the omnipotence of God it may be, and we know out of the Scriptures it must be: that works upon our faith, this upon our reason; that it is man that must be saved, man that must be damned; and to constitute a man, there must be a body as well as a soul. Nay, the immortality of the soul will not so well lie in proof, 'without a resuming of the body. For, upon those words of the apostle, 'If there were no resurrection, we were the miserablest of all men,' the school reasons reasonably: naturally the soul and body are united; when they are separated by death, it is contrary to nature, which nature still affects this union; and consequently the soul is the less perfect for this separation: and it is not likely that the perfect natural state of the soul, which is, to be united to the body, should last but three or four score years, and in most much less, and the unperfect state, that is, the separation, should last eternally, for ever: so that either the body must be believed to live again, or the soul believed to die.

Never therefore dispute against thine own happiness; never say, God asks the heart, that is, the soul, and therefore rewards the soul, or punishes the soul, and hath no respect to the body; *Nec auferamus cogitationes a collegio carnis*, says Tertulian; never go about to separate the thoughts of the heart from the college, from the fellowship of the body; *siquidem in carne, et cum carne, et per carnem agitur, quicquid ab anima agitur*; all that the soul does, it does in, and with, and by the body. And therefore, (says he also,) *caro abluitur ut anima emaculetur*; the body is washed in baptism, but

it is that the soul might be made clean ; *Caro ungitur, ut anima consecratur* ; in all unctions, whether that which was then in use in baptism, or that which was in use at our transmigration and passage out of this world, the body was anointed, that the soul might be consecrated : *Caro signatur*, (says Tertullian still,) *ut anima muniatur* ; the body is signed with the cross, that the soul might be armed against tentations ; and again, *Caro de corpore Christi vescitur, ut anima de Deo saginetur* ; “ My body received the body of Christ, that my soul might partake of his merits.” He extends it into many particulars, and sums up all thus, *Non possunt in mercede separari, quæ opera conjungunt*, “ These two, body and soul, cannot be separated for ever, which, whilst they are together, concur in all that either of them do.” “ Never think it presumption,” says St. Gregory, *sperare in te, quod in se exhibuit Deus homo*, “ to hope for that in thyself which God admitted when he took thy nature upon him.” “ And God hath made it,” says he, “ more easy than so for thee to believe it, because not only Christ himself, but such men as thou art did rise at the resurrection of Christ.” And therefore when our bodies are dissolved and liquified in the sea, putrefied in the earth, resolved to ashes in the fire, macerated in the air, *velut vasa sua transfunditur caro nostra*,¹ make account that all the world is God’s cabinet, and water, and earth, and fire, and air, are the proper boxes in which God lays up our bodies for the resurrection. Curiously to dispute against our own resurrection, is seditiously to dispute against the dominion of Jesus ; who is not made Lord by the

¹ Tertullian.

resurrection, if he have no subjects to follow him in the same way. We believe him to be Lord, therefore let us believe his¹ and our resurrection.

This blessed day, which we celebrate now, he rose: he rose so as none before did, none after ever shall rise; he rose, others are but raised: 'Destroy this temple,' says he, 'and I will raise it;'¹ I, without employing any other architect. 'I lay down my life,' says he: the Jews could not have killed him when he was alive; if he were alive here now, the Jesuits could not kill him here now; except his being made Christ and Lord, an anointed King, have made him more open to them. 'I have a power to lay it down,' says he, 'and I have a power to take it up again.'²

'This day we celebrate his resurrection; this day let us celebrate our own: our own, not our one resurrection, for we need many. Upon those words of our Saviour to Nicodemus, *oportet denuo nasci*,¹ speaking of the necessity of baptism, *non solum denuo, sed tertio nasci oportet*, says St. Bernard, he must be born again and again; again by baptism, for original sin, and for actual sin; again by repentance: *infelix homo ego, et miserabilis casus*, says he, *cui non sufficit una regeneratio!* "Miserable man that I am, and miserable condition that I am fallen into, whom one regeneration will not serve!" So is it a miserable death that hath swallowed us, whom one resurrection will serve. We need three, but if we have not two, we were as well without one. There is a resurrection from worldly calamities, a resurrection from sin, and a resurrection from the grave.

¹ John, iii. 19.

² Ib. x. 17, 18.

Ib. iii. 3.

First, from calamities; for, as dangers are called death, (Pharaoh calls the plague of locusts a death: 'Intreat the Lord your God, that he may take from me this death only;'¹ and so St. Paul says in his dangers, 'I die daily,'²) so is the deliverance from danger called a resurrection: it is the hope of the wicked upon the godly, 'now that he lieth, he shall rise no more;'³ that is, now that he is dead in misery, he shall have no resurrection in this world. Now, this resurrection God does not always give to his servants, neither is this resurrection the measure of God's love of man, whether he do raise him from worldly calamities or no.

The second is the resurrection from sin; and therefore this St. John calls 'the first resurrection,'⁴ as though the other, whether we rise from worldly calamities or no, were not to be reckoned. *Anima spiritualiter cadit, et spiritualiter resurget*, says St. Augustine; "since we are sure there is a spiritual death of the soul, let us make sure a spiritual resurrection too." *Audacter dicam*, says St. Jerome; "I say confidently," *cum omnia posset Deus, suscitare virginem post ruinam, non potest*; "howsoever God can do all things, he cannot restore a virgin, that is fallen from it, to virginity again." He cannot do this in the body; but God is a spirit, and hath reserved more power upon the spirit and soul than upon the body, and therefore *audacter dicam*, I may say with the same assurance that St. Jerome does,—no soul hath so prostituted herself, so multiplied her fornications, but that God can make her a virgin again, and give her even the chastity of

¹ Exod. x. 17.² 1 Cor. xv. 31.³ Psalm xli. 8.⁴ Apoc. xx. 5.

Christ himself. Fulfil therefore that which Christ says, 'The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.'¹ Be this that hour, be this thy¹ first resurrection. Bless God's present goodness for this now, and attend God's leisure for the other resurrection hereafter. He that is 'the first fruits of them that slept,'² Christ Jesus, is awake; he dies no more, he sleeps no more. *Sacrificium pro te fuit, sed a te accepit quod pro te obtulit;*³ he offered a sacrifice for thee, but he had that from thee that he offered for thee: *primitiæ fuit, sed tuæ primitiæ*; he was the first fruits, but the first fruits of thy corn: *spera in te futurum, quod præcessit in primitiis tuis*; doubt not of having that in the whole crop, which thou hast already in thy first fruits; that is, to have that in thyself, which thou hast in thy Saviour. And what glory soever thou hast had in this world, glory inherited from noble ancestors, glory acquired by merit and service, glory purchased by money and observation, what glory of beauty and proportion, what glory of health and strength soever thou hast had in this house of clay, the glory of the latter house shall be greater than of the former.'⁴ To this glory, the God of this glory, by glorious or inglorious ways, such as may most advance his own glory, bring us in his time, for his Son Christ Jesus' sake. Amen.

¹ John, v. 25.³ August.² 1 Cor. xv. 20.⁴ Hag. ii. 9.

SERMON VIII.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

BY DR. DONNE.

S E R M O N V I I I .

REVÉLATIONS, XX. 6.

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first-resurrection.

IN the first book of the Scriptures, that of Genesis, there is danger in departing from the letter: in this last book, this of the Revelation, there is as much danger in adhering too close to the letter. The literal sense is always to be preserved; but the literal sense is not always to be discerned: for the literal sense is not always that which the very letter and grammar of the place presents; as where it is literally said, that 'Christ is a vine,' and literally, that 'his flesh is bread,' and literally, that the new Jerusalem is thus situated, thus built, thus furnished. But the literal sense of every place, is the principal intention of the Holy Ghost in that place. And his principal intention, in many places, is to express things by allegories, by figures; so that in many places of Scripture a figurative sense is the literal sense, and more in this book than in any other. As then to depart from the

literal sense, that sense which the very letter presents, in the book of Genesis, is dangerous, because if we do so there, we have no history of the creation of the world in any other place to stick to; so to bind ourselves to such a literal sense in this book, will take from us the consolation of many spiritual happinesses, and bury us in the carnal things of this world.

. The first error, of being too allegorical in Genesis, transported divers of the ancients beyond the certain evidence of truth; and the second error of being too literal in this book, fixed many, very many, very ancient, very learned, upon an evident falsehood; which was, that because here is mention of 'a first resurrection, and of a reigning with Christ a thousand years after that first resurrection,' there should be to all the saints of God a state of happiness in this world, after Christ's coming, for a thousand years; in which happy state, though some of them have limited themselves in spiritual things, that they should enjoy a kind of conversation with Christ, and an impeccability. and a quiet serving of God without any reluctations, or concupiscences, or persecutions; yet others have dreamed on, and enlarged their dreams to an enjoying of all these worldly happinesses, which they, being formerly persecuted, did formerly want in this world, and then should have them for a thousand years together in recompence. And even this branch of that error, of possessing the things of this world so long in this world, did very many, and very good, and very great men, whose names are in honour, and justly, in the church of God, in those first times stray into; and flattered themselves with an ima-

ginary intimation of some such thing, in these words, 'Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.' •

Thus far then the text is literal,—that this resurrection in the text is different from the general resurrection. The first differs from the last. And thus far it is figurative, allegorical, mystical, that it is a spiritual resurrection that is intended. But wherein spiritual? or of what spiritual resurrection? In the figurative exposition of those places of Scripture, which require that way oft to be figuratively expounded, that expositor is not to be blamed, who, not destroying the literal sense, proposes such a figurative sense as may exalt our devotion and advance our edification; and as no one of those expositors did ill in proposing one such sense, so neither do those expositors ill, who with those limitations, that it destroy not the literal sense, that it violate not the analogy of faith, that it advance devotion, do propose another and another such sense. So doth that preacher well also, who, to the same end and within the same limit, makes his use of both, of all those expositions; because all may stand, and it is not evident, in such figurative speeches, which is the literal, that is, the principal intention of the Holy Ghost.

Of these words of this 'first resurrection' (which is not the last, of the body, but a spiritual resurrection) there are three expositions authorized by persons of good note in the church. First, that this first resurrection is a resurrection from that low estate to which persecution had brought the church: and so it belongs to this whole state and church; and 'blessed are we who have our part in this first

resurrection.’¹ Secondly, that it is a resurrection from the death of sin, of actual and habitual sin; so it belongs to every particular penitent soul; and “blessed art thou, blessed am I, if we have part in this first resurrection.”² And then, thirdly, because after this resurrection it is said, ‘that we shall reign with Christ a thousand years,’ (which is a certain for an uncertain, a limited for a long time,) it hath also been taken for the state of the soul in heaven, after it is parted from the body by death;³ for though the soul cannot be said properly to have a resurrection, because properly it cannot die; yet to be thus delivered from the danger of a second death by future sin, to be removed from the distance, and latitude, and possibility of tentations in this world, is by very good expositors called a resurrection; and so it belongs to all them who are departed in the Lord: ‘Blessed and holy is he that hath part in this first resurrection.’ And then the occasion of the day which we celebrate now, being the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus, invites me to propose a fourth sense, or rather use of the words; not indeed as an exposition of the words, but as a convenient exaltation of our devotion; which is, that this first resurrection should be the first fruits of the dead. The first rising is the first Riser, Christ Jesus: for as Christ says of himself, that ‘he is the resurrection,’ so he is the first resurrection, the root of the resurrection. He upon whom our resurrection, all ours, all our kinds of resurrections are founded; and so it belongs to state, and church, and par-

¹ Alcazar

² August et nostri.

³ Ribera.

ticular persons, alive and dead : ' Blessed and holy is he that hath part in this first resurrection.'

And these four considerations of the words ; a resurrection from persecution, by deliverance ; a resurrection from sin, by grace ; a resurrection from temptation to sin, by the way of death, to the glory of heaven ; and all these in the first resurrection, in him that is the root of all, in Christ Jesus. These four steps, these four passages, these four transitions will be our quarter-clock for this hour's exercise.

I. First then, we consider this first resurrection to be a resurrection from a persecution for religion, for the profession of the gospel, to a forward glorious passage of the gospel. And so a learned expositor in the Roman church carries the exposition of this whole place (though not indeed the ordinary way, yet truly not incommodiously, not improperly) upon that deliverance which God afforded his church, from those great persecutions which had otherwise supplanted her, in her first planting, in the primitive times. Then, says he, (and in part well towards the letter of the place,) " the devil was chained for a thousand years, and then we began ' to reign with Christ for a thousand years ;' reckoning the time from that time when God destroyed idolatry more fully, and gave peace and rest, and free exercise of the Christian religion, under the Christian emperors, till antichrist, in the height of his rage shall come, and let this thousand years' prisoner, Satan, loose, and so interrupt our thousand years' reign with Christ, with new persecutions. In that persecution was the death of the church, in the eye of the world. In that deliverance by Christian emperors was the resurrection of

the church ; and in God's protecting her ever since is the chaining up of the devil, and our reigning with Christ for those thousand years."

And truly, beloved, if we consider the low, the very low estate of Christians in those persecutions, tried ten times in the fire, ten several and distinct persecutions,—in which ten persecutions God may seem to have had a mind to deal evenly with the world, and to lay as much upon his people, whom he would try then, as he had laid upon others, for his people before, and so to equal the ten plagues of Egypt,—in ten persecutions, in the primitive church ; if we consider that low, that very low estate, we may justly call their deliverance a resurrection. For as God said to Jerusalem, ' I found thee in thy blood, and washed thee,' so Christ Jesus found the church, the Christian church in her blood, and washed her, and wiped her ; washed her in his own blood, which washes white, and wiped her with the garments of his own righteousness, that she might be acceptable in the sight of God ; and then wiped all tears from her eyes, took away all occasions of complaint, and lamentation, that she might be glorious in the eyes of man, and cheerful in her own ; such was her resurrection.

We wonder, and justly, at the effusion, at the pouring out of blood, in the sacrifices of the old law ; that that little country, scarce bigger than some three of our shires, should spend more cattle in some few days' sacrifice at some solemnities, and every year in the sacrifices of the whole year, than perchance this kingdom could give to any use. Seas of blood, and yet but brooks ; tuns of blood, and yet but basons, compared with the sacrifices, the sacrifices of the blood of men, in the persecu-

tions of the primitive church. For every ox of the Jew, the Christian spent a man, and for every sheep and lamb, a mother and her child; and for every herd of cattle, sometimes a town of inhabitants, sometimes a legion of soldiers, all martyred at once; so that they did not stand to fill their martyrologies with names, but with numbers; they had not room to say, such a day, such a bishop—such a day, such a general; but the day of five hundred, the day of five thousand martyrs, and the martyrdom of a city, or the martyrdom of an army. This was not a Red Sea, such as the Jews passed, a sinus, a creek, an arm, an inlet, a gut of a sea, but a red ocean, that overflowed and surrounded all parts; and from the depth of this sea God raised them; and such was their resurrection. Such, as that they which suffered, lay and bled with more ease than the executioner stood and sweat; and embraced the fire more fervently than he blew it; and many times had this triumph in their death, that even the executioner himself was, in the act of execution, converted to Christ, and executed with them: such was their resurrection.

When the state of the Jews was in that depression, in that conculcation, in that consternation, in that extermination in the captivity of Babylon, as that God presents it to the prophet in that vision, in the field of dry bones, so, *fili hominis*, 'Son of man, as thou art a reasonable man, dost thou think these bones can live, that these men can ever be re-collected to make up a nation?' The prophet saith, *Domine, tu scis*, 'Lord, thou knowest;' which is, not only thou knowest whether they can or no, but thou knowest clearly they can; thou canst make them up of bones again, for thou madest

those bones of earth before. If God had called in the angels to the making of man at first, and as he said to the prophet, *fili hōminis*, ‘Son of man, as thou art a reasonable man,’ so he had said to them, *fili Dei*, as you are the sons of God, illumined by his face, do you think that this clod of red earth can make a man, a man that shall be equal to you in one of his parts, in his soul, and yet then shall have such another part, as that he whom all you worship, my essential Son, shall assume and invest that part himself, can that man, made of that body and that soul, be made of this clod of earth? Those angels would have said, *Domine, tu scis*, Lord, thou must needs know how to make as good creatures as us of earth, who madest us of that which is infinitely less than earth—of nothing, before. To induce, to facilitate these apprehensions, there were some precedents, some such thing had been done before. But when the church was newly conceived, and then lay like the egg of a dove, and a giant’s foot over it; like a worm, like an ant, and hill upon hill whelmed upon it; nay, like a grain of corn between the upper and lower mill-stone, ground to dust between tyrants and heretics, when as she bled in her cradle, in those children whom Herod slew, so she bled upon her crutches, in those decrepit men whom former persecutions and torments had crippled before, when east and west joined hands to crush her, and hands and brains joined execution to consultation to annihilate her; in this wane of the moon, God gave her an instant fulness; in this exinanition, instant glory; in this grave, an instant resurrection.

But, beloved, the expressing the pressing of their depressions, does but chafe the wax; the printing

of the seal, is the reducing to your memory your own case; and not that point in your case, as you were for a few years under a sensible persecution of fire and prisons; that was the least, part of your persecution; for it is a cheap purchase of heaven if we may have it for dying: to sell all we have to buy that field where we know the treasure is, is not so hard as not to know it;¹ to part with all for the great pearl, is not so hard a bargain as not to know that such a pearl there might have been had. We could not say heaven was kept from us, when we might have it for a fagot, and when even our enemies helped us to it: but your great affliction was, as you were long before, in an insensibleness; you thought yourselves well enough, and yet were under a worse persecution of ignorance and of superstition, when you, in your father's, were so far from expecting a resurrection as that you did not know your low estate, or that you needed a resurrection; and yet God gave you a resurrection from it, a reformation of it.

Now, 'who have their parts in this first resurrection?' or upon what conditions have you it? We see in the fourth verse, 'They that are beheaded for the witness of Jesus;' that is, that are ready to be so, when the glory of Jesus shall require that testimony. In the mean time, as it follows there, 'They that have not worshipped the beast;' that is, not applied the honour and the allegiance due to their Sovereign, to any foreign state; nor the honour due to God, that is, infallibility, to another prelate; 'that have not worshipped the beast, nor his image,' says the text; that is, that

¹ Matt. xiii. 44.

have not been transported with vain imaginations of his power, and his growth upon us here, which hath been so diligently painted, and printed, and preached, and set out in the promises, and practices of his instruments, to delude slack and easy persons : and then, as it is added there, ' that have not received his mark upon their foreheads ; ' that is, not declared themselves Romanists apparently ; ' nor in their hands,' says the text ; that is, which ' have not underhand sold their secret endeavours, though not their public profession, to the advancement of his cause. These men, who are ready to be beheaded for Christ, and have not worshipped the beast, nor the image of the beast, nor received his mark upon their foreheads nor in their hands, these have their parts in this first resurrection. These are blessed and holy, says our text ; blessed, because ' they have means to be holy, in this resurrection ; for the Lamb hath unclasped the book ; the Scriptures are open—which way to holiness our fathers lacked : and then, our blessedness is, that we shall reign a thousand years with Christ. Now since this first resurrection, since the reformation we have reigned so with Christ but one hundred years ; but if we persist in a good use of it, our posterity shall add the cipher, and make that one hundred one thousand, even to the time when Christ Jesus shall come again ; and as he hath given us the first, so shall give us the last resurrection ; and to that come Lord Jesus, come quickly ! and till that, continue this.

II. This is the first resurrection in the first acceptance,—a resurrection from persecution and a peaceable enjoying of the gospel : and in a second, it is a resurrection from sin ; and so it hath a more

particular appropriation to every person. So St. Augustine takes this place, and with him many of the fathers, and with them many of the sons of the fathers—better sons of the fathers than the Roman church will confess them to be, or than they are themselves,—the expositors of the reformed church ; they, for the most part, with St. Augustine, take this first resurrection, to be a resurrection from sin. *Inter abjectos abjectissimus peccator.*¹ No man falls lower than he that falls into a course of sin : sin is a fall ; it is not only a deviation, a turning out of the way, upon the right or the left hand, but it is a sinking, a falling : in the other case, of going out of the way, a man may stand upon the way and inquire, and then proceed in the way, if he be right, or to the way, if he be wrong ; but when he is fallen and lies still, he proceeds no further, inquires no further. To be too apt to conceive scruples in matters of religion, stops and retards a man in the way ; to mistake some points in the truth of religion, puts a man for that time in a wrong way ; but to fall into a course of sin, this makes him insensible of any end that he hath to go to, of any way that he hath to go by. God hath not removed man, not withdrawn man from this earth ; he hath not given him the air to fly in, as to birds, nor spheres to move in, as to sun and moon ; he hath left him upon the earth ; and not only to tread upon it, as in contempt, or in mere dominion, but to walk upon it, in the discharge of the duties of his calling ; and so to be conversant with the earth is not a falling. But as when man was nothing but earth, nothing but a body, he lay

¹ Gregor.

flat upon the earth, his mouth kissed the earth, his hands embraced the earth, his eyes respected the earth; and then God breathed the breath of life into him, and that raised him so far from the earth as that only one part of his body (the soles of his feet) touches it; and yet man, so raised by God, by sin fell lower to the earth again than before,—from the face of the earth to the womb, to the bowels, to the grave: so God, finding the whole man, as low as he found Adam's body then, fallen in original sin, yet erects us by a new breath of life, in the sacrament of baptism; and yet we fall lower than before we were raised, from original into actual, into habitual sins; so low, as that we think not that we need, know not that there is a resurrection; and that is the wonderful, that is the fearful fall.

Though those words, *Quomodo cecidisti de cælo, Lucifer!* 'How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, the son of the morning!' be ordinarily applied to the fall of the angels, yet it is evident that they are literally spoken of the fall of a man. It deserves wonder, more than pity, that man, whom God had raised to so noble a height in him, should fall so low from him. Man was born to love; he was made in the love of God; but then man falls in love; when he grows in love with the creature he falls in love. As we are bid to honour the physician, and to use the physician; but, yet it is said in the same chapter, he that sinneth before his Maker, let him fall into the hands of the physician.* It is a blessing to use him, it is a curse to rely upon him; so it is a blessing to glorify

¹ Isaiah, xiv. 12.

² Ecclus. xxxviii. 1, 15.

God in the right use of his creatures, but to grow in love with them is a fall; for we love nothing that is so good as ourselves: beauty, riches, honour, is not so good as man; man capable of grace here, of glory hereafter. Nay, as those things which we love in their nature are worse than we which love them; so in our loving them, we endeavour to make them worse than they in their own nature are: by over-loving the beauty of the body we corrupt the soul; by over-loving honour and riches we deflect and detort these things which are not in their nature ill, to ill uses, and make them serve our ill purposes. Man falls as a fall of waters, that throws down and corrupts all that it embraces. Nay, beloved, when a man hath used those wings which God hath given him, and raised himself to some height in religious knowledge and religious practice; as Eutichus, out of a desire to hear Paul preach, was got up into a chamber, and up into a window of that chamber, and yet falling asleep, fell down dead; ¹ so we may fall into a security of our present state, into a pride of our knowledge, or of our purity; and so fall lower than they who never came to our height. So much need have we of a resurrection.

So sin is a fall, and every man is afraid of falling, even from his temporal station; more afraid of falling than of not being raised. And *qui, peccat, quatenus peccat, sit seipso deterior.*² In every sin a man falls from that degree which himself had before; in every sin he is dishonoured; he is not so good a man as he was: impoverished, he hath not so great a portion of grace as he had; infatuated,

¹ Acts, xx. 9.

² Clem Alex.

he hath not so much of the true wisdom of the fear of God as he had; disarmed, he hath not that interest and confidence in the love of God that he had; and deformed, he hath not so lively a representation of the image of God as before. In every sin we become prodigals, but in the habit of sin we become bankrupts, afraid to come to an account. A fall is a fearful thing, that needs a raising, a help; but sin is a death, and that needs a resurrection; and a resurrection is as great a work as the very creation itself. It is death *in semine*, in the root; it produces, it brings forth death. It is death *in arbore*, in the body, in itself; death is a divorce, and so is sin; and it is death *in fructu*, in the fruit thereof: sin plants spiritual death, and this death produces more sin, obduration, impenitence, and the like.

Be pleased to return and cast one half thought upon each of these: sin is the root of death; 'death by sin entered, and death passed upon all men, for all men have sinned.'¹ It is death, because we shall die for it. But it is death in itself: we are dead already, dead in it. 'Thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead,'² was spoken to a whole church. It is not evidence enough to prove that thou art alive to say, 'I saw thee at a sermon: that Spirit that knows thy spirit; he that knows whether thou wert moved by a sermon, melted by a sermon, mended by a sermon, he knows whether thou be alive or no.'

That which had wont to be said, that dead men walked in churches, is too true: men walk out a sermon, or walk out after a sermon, as ill as they

¹ Rom. v. 12.

² Apoc. iii. 1.

walked in; they have a name that they live and are dead: 'but the hour is come, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God:' that is, at these hours they may hear if they will, and till they do hear they are dead. Sin is the root of death, the body of death, and then it is the fruit of death. St. Augustine confesses of himself, that he was *Allisus intra parietes in celebritate societatum tuarum*, that in great meetings upon solemn days, in the church, there, within the walls of God's house, *egit negotium procurandi fructus mortis*; ¹ he was not buying and selling doves, but buying and selling souls by wanton looks, cheapening and making the bargain of the fruits of death, as himself expresses it. Sin is the root and the tree and the fruit of death; the mother of death, death itself, and the daughter of death; and from this death, this threefold death, death past in our past sins, present death in our present insensibleness of sin, future death in those sins with which sins God will punish our former and present sins, (if he proceed merely in justice,) God affords us this first resurrection.

How? Thus: death is the divorce of body and soul; resurrection is the reunion of body and soul: and in this spiritual death and resurrection, which we consider now, and which is all-determined in the soul itself, grace is the soul of the soul, and so the departing of grace is the death, and the returning of grace is the resurrection of this sinful soul. But how? By what way, what means? Consider Adam. Adam was made to enjoy an immortality in his body; he induced death upon himself: and

¹ John, v. 25.

then, as God having made marriage for a remedy against uncleanness, intemperate men make even marriage itself an occasion of more uncleanness than if they had never married; so man having induced and created death by sin, God takes death, and makes it a means of the glorifying of his body in heaven. God did not induce death, death was not in his purpose; but *veluti medium opportunum, quo vas confractum rursus fingeretur*,¹ as a means whereby a broken vessel might be made up again, God took death, and made it serve for that purpose, that men by the grave might be translated to heaven.

So then, to the resurrection of the body there is an ordinary way, the grave; to the resurrection of the soul there is an ordinary way too, the church. In the grave, the body that must be there prepared for the last resurrection hath worms that eat upon it. In the church, the soul that comes to this first resurrection must have worms: the worm, the sting, the remorse, the compunction of conscience. In those that have no part in this first resurrection, the worm of conscience shall never die, but gnaw on to desperation; but those that have not this worm of conscience, this remorse, this compunction, shall never live. In the grave, which is the furnace which ripens the body for the last resurrection, there is a putrefaction of the body, and an ill savour. In the church, the womb where my soul must be mellowed for this first resurrection; my soul, which hath the savour of death in it, as it is leavened throughout with sin, must stink in my nostrils, and I come to a detestation of all those

¹ Cyril. Alex.

sins which have putrefied her. And I must not be afraid to accuse myself, to condemn myself, to humble myself, lest I become a scorn to men; *Nemo me derideat ab eo medico ægrum sanati, à quo sibi præstitum est ne ægrotaret.* Let no man despise me, or wonder at me, that I am so humbled under the hand of God, or that I fly to God as to my physician when I am sick, since the same God that hath recovered me as my physician when I was sick, hath been his physician too, and kept him from being sick, who, but for that physician, had been as ill as I was. At least, he must be his physician, if ever he come to be sick, and come to know that he is sick, and come to a right desire to be well. Spiritual death was before bodily; sin before the wages of sin: God hath provided a resurrection for both deaths, but first for the first; this is the first resurrection,—reconciliation to God, and the returning of the soul of our soul, grace in his church by his word, and his seals there.

Now, every repentance is not a resurrection; it is rather a waking out of a dream than a rising to a new life. Nay, it is rather a startling in our sleep, than any awaking at all, to have a sudden remorse, a sudden flash, and no constant perseverance. 'Awake, thou that sleepest,' says the apostle, out of the prophet. First 'awake,' come to a sense of thy state; and then 'arise from the dead,' says he, from the practice of dead works; and then, 'Christ shall give thee light,' life, and strength to walk in new ways. It is a long work, and hath many steps: 'awake, arise,' and 'walk;' and therefore set out betimes. At the last day, in those which shall

¹ August.

² Ephes. v. 14; Isaiah, lx. 1.

be found alive upon the earth, we say there shall be a sudden death, and a sudden resurrection: *in raptu, in transitu, in ictu oculi*; 'in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye;' but do not thou trust to have this first resurrection, *in raptu, in transitu, in ictu oculi*, in thy last passage, upon thy death-bed, when the twinkling of the eye must be the closing of thine eyes; but, as we assign to glorified bodies after the last resurrection certain dotes, (as we call them in the school,) certain endowments, so labour thou to find those endowments in thy soul here, if thou art come to this first resurrection.

Amongst those endowments we assign subtlety, agility. The glorified body is become more subtle, more nimble, not encumbered, not disable for any motion that it would make; so hath that soul which is come to this first resurrection, by grace, a spiritual agility, a holy nimbleness in it, that it can slide by tentations, and pass through tentations, and never be polluted; follow a calling, without taking infection, by the ordinary tentations of that calling. So have those glorified bodies clarity, a brightness upon them, from the face of God; and so have these souls, which are come to this first resurrection, a sun in themselves, an inherent light, by which they can presently distinguish between action and action; what must, what may, what must not be done. But of all the endowments of the glorified body, we consider most, impassibility, that that body shall suffer nothing, and is sure that it shall suffer nothing. And that which answers that endowment of the body most in this soul, that is come to this first resurrection, is as the apostle

speaks, 'that neither persecution, sickness, nor death, shall separate her from Christ Jesus.'¹ In heaven we do not say, that our bodies shall divest their mortality, so as that naturally they could not die; for they shall have a composition still; and every compounded thing may perish: but they shall be so assured, and with such a preservation, as they shall always know they shall never die. St. Augustine says well, *Adsit motio, absit fatigatio, adsit potestas vescendi, absit necessitas esuriendi*: they have in their nature a mortality, and yet are immortal; a possibility and an impossibility of dying, with those two divers relations, one to nature, the other to preservation, will consist together. So in this soul, that hath this first resurrection from sin by grace, a conscience of her own infirmity, that she may relapse, and yet a testimony of the powerfulness of God's Spirit; that easily she shall not relapse, may consist well together. But the last seal of this holy confidence is reserved for that, which is the third acceptance of this first resurrection; not from persecutions in this world, nor from sin in this world, but from all possibility of falling back into sin in the world to come; and to this have divers expositors referred these words, this first resurrection. 'Blessed and holy is he that hath part in this first resurrection.'

III. Now, a resurrection of the soul seems an improper, an impertinent, an improbable, an impossible form of speech; for resurrection implies death, and the soul does not die in her passage to heaven. And therefore Damascen makes account, that he hath sufficiently proved the resurrection of

¹ Rom. viii. 35—39.

the body (which seems so incredible) if he could prove any resurrection. "If there be any resurrection at all," says he, "it must be of the body, for the soul cannot die, therefore not rise."¹ Yet have not those fathers, nor those expositors, who have in this text acknowledged a resurrection of the soul, mistaken nor miscalled the matter. Take Damascen's own definition of resurrection: *Resurrectio est ejus quod cecidit secunda surrectio*. "A resurrection is a second rising to that state from which any thing is formerly fallen." Now, though by death the soul do not fall into any such state as that it can complain, (for what can that lack which God fills?) yet by death the soul falls from that for which it was infused and poured into man at first; that is, to be the form of that body, the king of that kingdom; and therefore, when in the general resurrection, the soul returns to that state for which it was created, and to which it hath had an affection and a desire, even in the fulness of the joys of heaven, then when the soul returns to her office, to make up the man, because the whole man hath, therefore the soul hath a resurrection; not from death, but from a deprivation of her former state; that state which she was made for, and is ever inclined to. .

But that is the last resurrection; and so the soul hath part even in that last resurrection. But we are in hand with the first resurrection of the soul; and that is, when that soul, which was at first breathed from God, and hath long suffered a banishment, a close imprisonment in this body, returns to God again. The returning of the soul to

¹ De Ortho. Fid. l. 4. c. ult.

him from whom it proceeded at first, is a resurrection of the soul. Here then especially I feel the straitness of time. • Two considerations open themselves together, of such a largeness as all the time from Moses's *in principio*, when time began, to the angel's affidavit in this book, 'that shall say and swear, that time shall be no more,' were too narrow to contemplate these two hemispheres of man, this evening and morning of man's everlasting day. 'The miseries of man, in this banishment, in this imprisonment, in this grave of the soul, the body, and the glory and exaltation of that soul in her resurrection to heaven. That soul, which being born free, is made a slave to this body, by coming to it. It must act but what this body will give it leave to act, according to the organs which this body affords it; and if the body be lame in any limb, the soul must be lame in her operation in that limb too. It must do but what the body will have it do; and then it must suffer whatsoever that body puts it to, or whatsoever any others will put that body to. If the body oppress itself with melancholy, the soul must be sad; and if other men oppress the body with injury, the soul must be sad too. Consider, (it is too immense a thing to consider it,) reflect but one thought, but upon this one thing in the soul, here and hereafter, in her grave, the body, and in her resurrection in heaven: that is the knowledge of the soul.

"Here," says St. Augustine, "when the soul considers the things of this world," *non veritate certior, sed consuetudine securior*; "she rests upon such things as she is not sure are true, but such as she sees are ordinarily received and accepted for truths: so that the end of her knowledge is not truth, but

opinion; and the way, not inquisition, but ease. "But," says he, "when she proceeds in this life to search into heavenly things," *Verberatur luce veritatis*, "the beams of that light are too strong for her, and they sink her, and cast her down," *Et ad familiaritatem tenebrarum suarum, non electione sed fatigatione convertitur*; "and so she returns to her own darkness, because she is most familiar, and best acquainted with it;" *Non electione*, "not because she loves ignorance, but because she is weary of the trouble of seeking out the truth, and so swallows even any religion to escape the pain of debating and disputing; and in this laziness she sleeps out her lease, her term of life, in this death, in this grave, in this body."

But then in her resurrection, her measure is enlarged and filled at once. There she reads without spelling, and knows without thinking, and concludes without arguing. She is at the end of her race, without running; in her triumph, without fighting; in her haven, without sailing. A free-man without any apprenticeship; at full years, without any wardship; and a doctor, without any proceeding. She knows truly, and easily, and immediately, and entirely, and everlastingly. Nothing left out at first, nothing worn out at last, that conduces to her happiness. What a death is this life! what a resurrection is this death! For though this world be a sea, yet (which is most strange) our harbour is larger than the sea: heaven infinitely larger than this world. For, though that be not true which Origen is said to say, "that at last all shall be saved," nor that evident which Cyril of Alexandria says, "that without doubt the number of them that are saved, is far

greater than of them that perish," yet surely the number of them with whom we shall have communion in heaven, is greater than ever lived at once upon the face of the earth. And of those who lived in our time, how few did we know? and of those whom we did know, how few did we care much for? In heaven we shall have communion of joy and glory with all, always: *Ubi non intrat inimicus, nec amicus exit*:¹ "Where never any man shall come in that loves us not, nor go from us that does."²

Beloved, I think you could be content to hear, I could be content to speak of this resurrection, our glorious state, by the low way of the grave, till God by that gate of earth let us in at the other of precious stones. And blessed and holy is he who in a rectified conscience desires that resurrection now. But we shall not depart far from this consideration, by departing into our last branch, or conclusion, That this first resurrection may also be understood to be the first riser, Christ Jesus; and 'blessed and holy is he that hath part in that first resurrection.'

IV. This first resurrection is then without any detorting, any violence, very applicable to Christ himself, who was *primitiæ dormientium*, in that; in that action, 'that he rose again, he is become' says the apostle, 'the first fruits of them that sleep.'³ He did rise, and rise first; others rose with him, none before him: for St. Jerome, taking the words as he finds them in that evangelist, makes this note, "That though the graves were opened, at the instant of Christ's death, (death

¹ Aug.² 1 Cor. xv. 20.

was overcome, the city opened the gates,) yet the bodies did not rise till after Christ's resurrection. For, for such resurrections 'as are spoken of, 'that women received their dead 'raised to life again,' and such¹ as are recorded in the Old and New Testament, they were all imperfect and temporary resurrections, such as St. Jerome says of them all, *Resurgebant iterum morituri*. "They were but reprieved, not pardoned; they had a resurrection to life, but yet a resurrection to another death. Christ is the first resurrection; others were raised; but he only rose; they by a foreign and extrinsic, he by his own power."²

But we call him not the first in that respect only; for so he was not only the first, but the only; he alone rose by his own power: but with relation to all our future resurrections, he is the first resurrection. First, 'If Christ be not raised, your faith is in vain,'³ says the apostle; you have a vain faith if you believe in a dead man. He might be true man, though he remained in death; but it concerns you to believe that he was the Son of God too; 'and he was declared to be the Son of God, by the resurrection from the dead.'⁴ That was the declaration of himself, his justification; he was justified by the Spirit, when he was proved to be God by raising himself. But thus our justification is also in his resurrection; for, 'he was raised from the dead for our justification.'⁵ How for ours? 'That we should be also in the likeness of his resurrection.' What is that? That he hath told us before; 'our resurrection in Christ is, that we should walk in newness of life.'⁶

¹ Heb. xi. 35.² Jerome, in Matt. xxvii. 52.³ 1 Cor. xv. 17.⁴ Rom. i. 4.⁵ Ib. iv. ult.⁶ Ib. vi. 4.

So that then Christ is the first resurrection ; first, efficiently, the only cause of his own resurrection ; first, meritoriously, the only cause of our resurrection ; first, exemplarily, the only pattern how we should rise, and how we should walk when we are up : and therefore, blessed and happy are we, if we refer all our resurrections to this first resurrection, Christ Jesus. For as Job said of comforters, so miserable resurrections are they all without him.

If, therefore, thou need and seek this first resurrection, in the first acceptation, a resurrection from persecutions and calamities, as they oppress thee here, have thy recourse to him, to Christ. Remember that at the death of Christ there were earthquakes, the whole earth trembled ; there were rendings of the temple—schisms, convulsions, distractions in the church will be—but then the graves opened in the midst of those commotions : then, when thou thinkest thyself swallowed and buried in affliction, as the angel did his, Christ Jesus shall remove thy grave-stone, and give thee a resurrection ; but if thou think to remove it by thine own wit, thine own power, or the favour of potent friends, *digitus Dei non est hic*, “ the hand of God is not in all this,” and the stone shall lie still upon thee till thou putrefy into desperation, and thou shalt have no part in this first resurrection.

If thou need and seek this first resurrection in the second acceptation, from the fearful death of heinous sin, have thy recourse to him, to Christ Jesus, and remember the weight of the sins that lay upon him—all thy sins, and all thy father’s, and all thy children’s sins ; all those sins that did induce the first flood, and shall induce the last fire upon this world ; all those sins which, that we might take ex-

ample by them to escape them, are recorded, and which, lest we should take example by them to imitate them, are left unrecorded; all sins of all ages, all sexes, all places, all times, all callings; sins heavy in their substance, sins aggravated by their circumstances, all kinds of sins, and all particular sins of every kind, were upon him, upon Christ Jesus; and yet he raised his holy head, his royal head, though under thorns, yet crowned with those thorns, and triumphed in this first resurrection; and his body was not left in the grave, nor his soul in hell. Christ's first tongue was a tongue that might be heard; he spoke to the shepherds by angels: his second tongue was a star, a tongue which might be seen; he spoke to the wise men of the east by that. Hearken after him these two ways;—as he speaks to thine ear (and to thy soul by it) in the preaching of his word, as he speaks to thine eye (and so to thy soul by that) in the exhibiting of his sacraments, and thou shalt have thy part in this first resurrection. But if thou think to overcome this death, this sense of sin, by diversions, by worldly delights, by mirth, and music, and society; or by good works, with a confidence of merit in them; or with a relation to God himself, but not as God hath manifested himself to thee, not in Christ Jesus; the stone shall lie still upon thee till thou putrefy into desperation, and then hast thou no part in this first resurrection.

If thou desire this first resurrection in the third acceptation, as St. Paul did, to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, go Christ's way to that also. He desired that glory that thou dost; and he could have laid down his soul when he would, but he staid his hour, says the Gospel. He could have as-

cended immediately, immediately in time, yet he staid to descend into hell first; and he could have ascended immediately of himself, by going up, yet he staid till he was taken up. Thou hast no such power of thine own soul and life, not for the time, not for the means of coming to this first resurrection by death; stay therefore patiently, stay cheerfully God's leisure till he call, but not so overcheerfully as to be loath to go when he calls. Relief in persecution by power, reconciliation in sin by grace, dissolution and transmigration to heaven by death, are all within this first resurrection; but that which is before them all is Christ Jesus.

And therefore, as all that the natural man promises himself without God is impious, so all that we promise ourselves, though by God, without Christ, is frivolous. God, who hath spoken to us by his Son, works upon us by his Son too: he was our creation, he was our redemption, he is our resurrection. And that man trades in the world without money, and goes out of the world without recommendation, that leaves out Christ Jesus. To be a good moral man, and refer all to the law of nature in our hearts, is but *diluculum*, "the dawning of the day;" to be a godly man, and refer to God, is but *crepusculum*, "a twilight;" but the meridional brightness, the glorious noon and height, is to be a Christian; to pretend to no spiritual, no temporal blessing, but for, and by, and through, and in our only Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus; for he is this first resurrection, and 'blessed and holy is he that hath part in this first resurrection.'

SERMON IX.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

BY DR. DONNE.

S E R M O N IX.

JOHN, v. 28, 29.

Marvel not at this ; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

As the sun works diversely, according to the diverse disposition of the subject, (for the sun melts wax, and it hardens clay,) so do the good actions of good men : upon good men they work a virtuous emulation, a noble and a holy desire to imitate ; upon bad men they work a vicious and impotent envy, a desire to disgrace and calumniate. And the more the good is that is done, and the more it works upon good men, the more it disaffects the bad ; for so the Pharisees express their rancour and malignity against Christ in this Gospel : ‘ If we let him thus alone, all men will believe in him ;’ and that they foresaw would destroy them in their reputation. And therefore they enlarged their malice

¹ John, xi. 48.

beyond Christ himself, to him upon whom Christ had wrought a miracle, to Lazarus: 'They consulted to put him to death, because by reason of him many believed in Jesus.'¹ Our text leads us to another example of this impotency in envious men. Christ in this chapter had, by his only word, cured a man that had been eight and thirty years infirm; and he had done this work upon the Sabbath. They envied the work in the substance, but they quarrel with the circumstance; and they envy Christ, but they turn upon the man who was more obnoxious to them; and they tell him, 'that it was not lawful for him to carry his bed that day.'² He discharges himself upon Christ:—I dispute not with you concerning the law; this satisfies me, 'he that made me whole, bade me take up my bed and walk.'³ Thereupon they put him to find out Jesus; and when he could not find Jesus, Jesus found him, and in his behalf offers himself to the Pharisees. Then they direct themselves upon him, and (as the gospel says) 'they sought to slay him, because he had done this upon the Sabbath:'⁴ and as the patient had discharged himself upon Christ, Christ discharges himself upon his Father:—Doth it displease you that I work upon the Sabbath? Be angry with God, be angry with the Father, for the Father works when I work.⁵ And then this they take worse than his working of miracles, or his working upon the Sabbath, 'that he would say, that God was his Father:'⁶ and therefore in the averring of that, that so important point, 'that God was his Father,' Christ grows into a holy ve-

John, xii. 10.
Ibid, v. 16.

² Ibid, v. 10.
⁴ Ibid, v. 17.

³ Ibid, v. 11.
⁶ Ibid, v. 18.

hemence, and earnestness, and he repeats his usual oath, 'Verily, verily,' three several times: first, 'that whatsoever the Father doth, he the Son doth also;' ¹ and then, 'He that believeth on me, and him that sent me, hath life everlasting.' ² And then again, 'The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear it shall live.' ³ At this, that the dead should live, they marvelled; but because he knew that they were men more affected with things concerning the body than spiritual things, as in another story, when they wondered that he would pretend to forgive sins, because he knew that they thought it a greater matter to bid that man that had the palsy, take up his bed and walk, than to forgive him his sins; therefore he took that way which was hardest in their opinion, he did bid him take up his bed and walk. So here, when they wondered at his speaking of a spiritual resurrection, to hear him say, that at his preaching, the dead (that is, men spiritually dead in their sins) should rise again, to them who more respected the body, and did less believe a real resurrection of the body than a figurative resurrection of the soul, he proceeds to that which was, in their apprehension, the more difficult. 'Marvel not at this,' says he, here in our text; not at that spiritual resurrection by preaching; 'for the hour is coming, in the which, all that are in the graves,' &c. and so he establishes the resurrection of the body.

That then which Christ affirms and avows is, that he is the Son of God; and that is the first thing that ever was done in heaven, the eternal generation of

¹ John, v. 19.

² Ibid, v. 24.

³ Ibid, v. 25.

the Son: that by which he proves this to these men is, that by him there shall be a resurrection of the body; and that is the last thing that shall be done in heaven; for after that there is nothing but an even continuance in equal glory. Before that, says he,—that is, before the resurrection of the body,—there shall be another resurrection, a spiritual resurrection of the soul from sin; but that shall be by ordinary means, by preaching and sacraments, and it shall be accomplished every day: but fix not upon that, determine not your thoughts upon that, marvel not at that, make that no cause of extraordinary wonder, but make it ordinary to you; feel it, and find the effect thereof in your souls, as often as you hear, as often as you receive, and thereby provide for another resurrection, ‘For the hour is coming in which all that are in their graves,’ &c.

Where we must necessarily make thus many steps, though but short ones. First, the dignity of the resurrection, marvel at nothing so much as at this; nothing is so marvellous, so wonderful as this; and, secondly, the approach of the resurrection, ‘The hour is coming;’ and, thirdly, the generality, ‘all that are in the graves;’ and the instrument of the resurrection, ‘the voice of Christ, that shall be heard;’ and, lastly, the diverse end of the resurrection, ‘They shall come forth, they that have done good,’ &c. God hath a care of the body of man—that is first; and he defers it not—that is next; and he extends it to all—that is a third; and a fourth is, that he does that last act by him by whom he did the first, the creation, and all between, the redemption; that is, by his Son, by Christ; and then the last is, that this is an ever-

lasting separation and divorce of the good and the bad, the bad shall never be able to receive good from the good, nor to do harm to the good, after that.

First, then, Christ says, *ne miremini*, 'wonder not at this,' not at your spiritual resurrection—not that a sermon should work upon man—not that a sacrament should comfort a man; make it not a miracle, nor an extraordinary thing, by hearing to come to repentance, and so to such a resurrection. For though St. Augustine says, "that to convert a man from sin is as great a miracle as creation," yet St. Augustine speaks that of a man's first conversion, in which the man himself does nothing, but God all. Then he is made of nothing; but after God hath renewed him, and proposed ordinary means in the church still to work upon him, he must not look for 'miraculous working, but make God's ordinary means ordinary to him. This is *panis quotidianus*, the daily bread which God gives you, as often as you meet here, according to his ordinances. *Ne miremini*, stand not to wonder, as though you were not sure, but come to enjoy God's goodness, in his ordinary way here.

But it is, *ne miremini hoc*, 'wonder not at this;' but yet there are things which we may wonder at. *Nit admirari* is but the philosopher's wisdom: he thinks it a weakness to wonder at any thing, that any thing should be strange to him; but Christian philosophy that is rooted in humility, tells us, in the mouth of Clement, of Alexandria, *Principium veritatis est res admirari*, "The first step to faith is to wonder, to stand and consider, with a holy admiration, the ways and proceedings of God with man;" for admiration, wonder stands as in the

midst, between knowledge and faith, and hath an eye towards both. If I know a thing or believe a thing, I do not longer wonder; but when I find that I have reason to stop upon the consideration of a thing, so as that I see enough to induce admiration, to make me wonder, I come by that step, and God leads me by that end, to a knowledge, if it be of a natural or a civil thing, or to a faith, if it be of a supernatural and spiritual thing.

And therefore be content to wonder at this, that God would have such a care to dignify, and to crown, and to associate to his own everlasting presence the body of man. God himself is a spirit, and heaven is his place; my soul is a spirit, and so proportioned to that place:—that God, or angels, or our souls, which are all spirit, should be in heaven, *ne mirēmini*, never wonder at that. But since we wonder, and justly, that some late philosophers have removed the whole earth from the centre, and carried it up, and placed it in one of the spheres of heaven, that this clod of earth, this body of ours, should be carried up to the highest heaven, placed in the eye of God, set down at the right hand of God, *miremini hoc*, wonder at this. That God, all spirit, served with spirits, associated to spirits, should have such an affection, such a love to this body, this earthly body, this deserves this wonder. The Father was pleased to breathe into this body, at first, in the creation; the Son was pleased to assume this body himself, after, in the redemption. The Holy Ghost is pleased to consecrate this body, and make it his temple, by his sanctification; in that *faciamus hominem*, ‘Let us,’ all us, ‘make man:’ that consultation of the whole Trinity in making man, is exercised even upon this lower

part of man, the dignifying of his body. So far as that, amongst the ancient fathers, very many of them are very various and irresolved which way to pronounce, and very many of them clear in the negative in that point, that the soul of man comes not to the presence of God, but remains in some out places till the resurrection of the body: that observation, that consideration of the love of God to the body of man, withdrew them into that error, that the soul itself should lack the glory of heaven, till the body were become capable of that glory too.

They therefore oppose God in his purpose of dignifying the body of man, first, who violate and mangle this body, which is the organ in which God breathes; and they also which pollute and defile this body, in which Christ Jesus is apparelled; and they likewise who profane this body, which the Holy Ghost, as the high-priest, inhabits and consecrates.

Transgressors in the first kind, that put God's organ out of tune, that discompose and tear the body of man with violence, are those inhuman persecutors, who with racks and tortures, and prisons, and fires, and exquisite inquisitions, throw down the bodies of the true God's true servants, to the idolatrous worship of their imaginary gods; that torture men into hell, and carry them through the inquisition into damnation. St. Augustine moves a question, and institutes a disputation, and carries it somewhat problematically, whether torture be to be admitted at all or no. That presents a fair probability which he says against it. "We presume," says he, "that an innocent man should be able to hold his tongue in torture. That is no part of our purpose in torture," says he, "that he that is innocent should

accuse himself by confession and torture. And if an innocent man be able to do so, why should we not think that a guilty man, who shall save his life by holding his tongue in torture, should be able to do so? And then, where is the use of torture?" *Res fragilis, et periculosa questio*, says that lawyer, who is esteemed the law alone—Ulpian: it is a slippery trial, an uncertain, to convince by torture; for many times, says St. Augustine again, *Innocens luit pro incerto scelere certissimas penas*: "He that is yet but questioned, whether he be guilty or no, before that be known, is without all question miserably tortured." And whereas, many times, the passion of the judge, and the covetousness of the judge, and the ambition of the judge, are calamities heavy enough upon a man that is accused in this case of torture, *ignorantia judicis est calamitas plerumque innocentis*, says that father, for the most part, even the ignorance of the judge, is the greatest calamity of him that is accused. If the judge knew that he were innocent, he should suffer nothing; if he knew he were guilty, he should not suffer torture; but because the judge is ignorant and knows nothing, therefore the prisoner must be racked, and tortured, and mangled, says that father.

There is a whole epistle in St. Jerome, full of heavenly meditation, and of curious expressions. It is his forty-ninth epistle, *ad innocentium*: where a young man tortured for suspicion of adultery with a certain woman, *ut compendio cruciatus vitaret*, says he, for his ease, and to abridge his torment, and that he might thereby procure and compass a present death, confessed the adultery, though false: his confession was made evidence against the woman; and she makes that protestation, *Tu testis Domine*

Jesu, "Thou, Lord, Jesus, be my witness," *non ideo me negare velle, ne peream, sed idco mentiri nolle, ne peccem.* "I do not deny the fact for fear of death, but I dare not belie myself, nor betray mine innocence, for fear of sinning and offending the God of truth:" and, as it follows in that story, though no torture could draw any confession, any accusation from her, she was condemned; and one executioner had three blows at her with a sword, and another four, and yet she could not be killed.

And therefore, because story abounds with examples of this kind, how uncertain a way of trial and conviction torture is, though St. Augustine would not say that torture was unlawful, yet he says, it behoves every judge to make that prayer, *Erue me Domine a necessitatibus meis*; "If there be some cases, in which the judge must necessarily proceed to torture, O Lord, deliver me, from having any such case brought before me."

But what use soever there may be for torture for confession, in the inquisition they torture for a denial; for the denial of God, and for the renouncing of the truth of his gospel. As men of great place think it concerns their honour to do above that which they suffer, to make their revenges not only equal, but greater than their injuries, so the Roman church thinks it necessary to her greatness, to inflict more tortures now than were inflicted upon her in the primitive church; as though it were a just revenge, for the tortures she received then for being Christian, to torture better Christians than herself for being so. In which tortures the inquisition hath found one way to escape the general clamour of the world against them, which is to torture to that height, that few survive or come

abroad after to publish how they have been tortured. And these, first, oppose God's purpose, in the making, and preserving, and dignifying the body of man.

Transgressors herein, in the second kind, are they that defile the garment of Christ Jesus, the body in which he hath vouchsafed to invest and enwrap himself, and so apparel a harlot in Christ's clothes, and make that body which is his hers. That Christ should take my body, though defiled with fornication, and make it his, is strange; but that I, in fornication, should take Christ's body, and make it hers, is more. 'Know ye not,' says the apostle, 'that your bodies are the members of Christ?' And again, 'Know you not, that he that is joined to a harlot, is one body?'¹ Some of the Roman emperors made it treason to carry a ring that had their picture engraved in it to any place in the house of low office. What name can we give to that sin, to make the body of Christ the body of a harlot? And yet, the apostle there, as taking knowledge that we loved ourselves better than Christ, changes the edge of his argument, and argues thus: 'He that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.'² If ye will be bold with Christ's body, yet favour your own. No man ever hated his own body; and yet, no outward enemy is able so to macerate our body as our own licentiousness. 'Christ, who took all our bodily infirmities upon him, hunger and thirst, and sweat and cold, took no bodily deformities upon him: he took not a lame, a blind, a crooked body; and we, by our intemperance and licentiousness, deform

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 15, 16.

² Ibid. ver. 18.

that body which is his, all these ways. The licentious man, most of any, studies bodily handsomeness,—to be comely and gracious, and acceptable; and yet, soonest of any, deforms and destroys it, and makes that loathsome to all, which all his care was to make amiable; and so they oppose God's purpose of dignifying the body.

Transgressors in a third kind are they that sacrilegiously profane the temple of the Holy Ghost, by neglecting the respect and duties belonging to the dead bodies of God's saints, in a decent and comely accompanying them to convenient funerals. Heirs and executors are oftentimes defective in these offices, and pretend better employments of that, which would be (say they) vainly spent so. But remember you, of whom (in much such a case) that is said in St. John, 'This he said, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bore that which was put therein :'¹ this executors say, not because they intend pious uses, but because they bear, and bear away the bags. Generally, thy opinion must be no rule for other men's actions; neither in these cases of funerals must thou call all too much, which is more than enough. That woman's ointment poured upon Christ's feet, that hundred pound weight of perfumes to embalm his one body, was more than enough, necessarily enough; yet it was not too much for the dignity of that person, nor for the testimony of their zeal, who did it in so abundant manner.

Now, as in all these three ways, men may oppose

¹ John, xii. 6.

the purpose of God, in dignifying the body; so in concurring with God's purpose, for the dignifying thereof, a man may exceed and go beyond God's purpose in all three. God would not have the body torn and mangled with tortures in those cases; but then, he would not have it pampered with wanton delicacies, nor varnished with foreign complexion. It is ill when it is not our own heart that appears in our words; it is ill too, when it is not our own blood that appears in our cheeks. It may do some ill offices of blood, it may tempt; but it gives over when it should do a good office of blood, it cannot blush. If, when they are filling the wrinkles and graves of their face, they would remember that there is another grave that calls for a filling with the whole body, so even their pride would flow into a mortification. God would not have us put on a sad countenance, nor disfigure our face, in our fastings and other disciplines; God would not have us mar his work; nor would God have us go about to do his last work, which he hath reserved to himself in heaven, here upon earth; that is, to glorify our bodies with such additions here, as though we would need no glorification there.

So also in the second way of giving due respect to the body of man, a man may exceed God's purpose. God would not have the body corrupted and attenuated, shrunk and deformed with incontinency and licentiousness: but God would not have that sparing of the body, to dishonour or undervalue, or forbear marriage, nor to frustrate that which was one of God's purposes in the institution of marriage,—procreation of children. Marriage without

possibility of children, lacks one-half of God's purpose in the institution of marriage; for, the third reason of marriage, after the other two, (which two were for a helper, and for children,) which is, that marriage should be for a remedy, that third came in after; for at the time of the institution of marriage, man was not fallen into any inordinate concupiscences, and so, at that time, needed no remedy. Marriage without possibility of children, lacks one of God's two reasons for it; but marriage with a contract against children, or a practice against children, is not (says St. Augustine) a marriage, but a solemn, an avowed, a daily adultery. To choose to be ill in the sight of God, rather than to look ill in the sight of men is a perverse and a poisonous physic. The sin of Er and Onan in married men, the sin of procured abortions in married women do in many cases equal, in some exceed, the sin of adultery. To rob a husband or a wife of a future child, may be, in the wife or husband, as great a sin as to bring a supposititious or a spurious child into the father's inheritance. God would not have the comeliness, the handsomeness of the body defaced by incontinence and intemperance, but he would not have the care of that comeliness and handsomeness frustrate his purpose of children in marriage.

And as in those two, (God would not have the body tortured nor mangled, God would not have the body deformed by licentiousness,) so in his third respect to man's body, God would not have the bodies of his dead saints neglected, God's purpose may be exceeded too. God's purpose therein is, that all men should be decently, and honourable persons honourably, buried; but his purpose

herein is exceeded, when any rag of their skin, or chip of their bones, or lock of their hair, is kept for a relic, and made an universal balm and amulet and antidote," against all temporal and all spiritual diseases and calamities, not only against the rage of a fever, but of hell itself. What their counterfeit relics may do against their counterfeit hell—against their purgatory, I know not. That powerful, and precious, and only relic which is given to us against hell itself, is only the communion of the body and blood of Christ Jesus, left to us by him and preserved for us in the church, though his body be removed out of our sight.

To end this, *miremini hoc*, "marvel at this," at the wonderful love of God to the body of man, and thou wilt favour it so as not to macerate thine own body, with uncommanded and inhuman flagellations and whippings, nor afflict their bodies, who are in thy charge, with inordinate labour; thou wilt not dishonour this body, as it is Christ's body, nor deform it, as it is thine own, with intemperance; but thou wilt behave thyself towards it so, as towards one, whom it hath pleased the King to honour with a resurrection, (which was our first,) and not to defer that resurrection long, which is the next step: *Venit hora*, 'The hour is coming.'

Non talem Deum tuum putes, qualis nec tu debes esse, is excellently said by St. Augustine. Never presume upon any other disposition in God, than such as thou findest in thine own heart, that thou art bound to have in thyself; for we find in our hearts a band of conformity, and assimilation to God, that is, to be as like God as we can. Therefore whatsoever thou findest thyself bound to do to another, thou mayst expect at God's hand. Thou

art bound to help up another that is fallen, therefore thou mayst assure thyself that God will give thee a resurrection: so, thou findest in thy heart, that the soul of an alms, the soul of a benefit, that that gives it life, is the speedy, the present doing of it. Therefore thou mayst be sure that God will make speed to save thee, that he will not long defer this thy resurrection, *hora venit*. St. Augustine, comparing the former resurrection, which is the spiritual resurrection of the soul,¹ with this in the text, which is the resurrection of the body, observes, that there Christ says, *hora venit, et nunc est*, 'the hour is coming, and now is;' because in every private inspiration of the Holy Ghost, in every sermon, in every meeting of the congregation, the dead may hear and live; *nunc est*, they may do it now. But that in this resurrection in the text, the resurrection of the body, it is not said, *nunc est*, that the hour is now; for the Son of man, who says it, (as he is the Son of man,) knows not when it shall be. But he says, *hora venit*, 'it is coming,' and coming apace, and coming quickly, shortly.

As soon as God had made man, he gave him his patent *dominamini*, dominion over the creature. As soon as man was fallen, God gave him the promise of a Messiah. And of his second coming, himself says, *Ecce venio cito* 'Behold, I come speedily.' *Venit*, "he comes," he is upon the way; and *Ecce venit*, "Behold, he comes!" he is within sight; you may see him in his forerunning tokens; and *Ecce cito*, as little way as he hath to go, he makes haste. And there is a Jesuit that makes the haste so great, as that he says, "Howsoever St.

¹ John, v. 25.

Augustine make use of that note, that it is not said in the text, *nunc est*, that the hour of the resurrection is now, yet he does believe that Christ did say so, though the evangelist left it out."¹ We need not say so; we do not; so much less liberty do we take in departing from the fathers, than the Roman authors do. But yet, so as St. John speaks, *hora novissima*, 'this is the last time,' ('Now there are many antichrists, whereby we know that this is the last time.'²) And so, as St. Peter speaks, 'Be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.'³ So as this *nunc* may signify *ultimum statum*, "the last course of times," the time not of nature, nor of law, but of grace; so we admit that addition in this resurrection too, *hora venit, et nunc est*, 'the hour is coming, and now is:' because there are no other means to be hereafter instituted for the attaining of a happy resurrection, than those that now are established in the church, especially at a man's death, may we very properly say, *nunc est*; "now is the resurrection come to him," not only because the last judgment is involved in the first, (for that judgment which passeth upon every man at his death, stands for ever without repeal, or appeal, or error,) but because after the death of the body, there is no more to be done with the body, till the resurrection; for as we say of an arrow, that it is over-shot, it is gone, it is beyond the mark, though it be not come to the mark yet, because there is no more to be done to it till it be; so we may say, that he that is come to death, is come to his resurrection.

¹ Maldon.² 1 John, ii. 18.³ 2 Pet iii. 8.

because he hath not another step to make, another foot to go, another minute to count, till he be at the resurrection.

The resurrection, then, being the coronation of man, his death and lying down in the grave is his enthroning, his sitting down in that chair where he is to receive that crown. As then the martyrs under the altar, though in heaven, yet do cry out for the resurrection; so let us, in this miserable life, submit ourselves cheerfully to the hand of God, in death, since till that death we cannot have this resurrection, and the first thing that we shall do after this death is to rise again. To the child that is now born, we may say, *hora venit*, "the day of his resurrection is coming." To him that is old, we may say, the hour is come, but to him that is dead, the minute is come, because to him there are no more minutes till it do come.

Miremini hoc, marvel at this, at the descent of God's love,—he loves the body of man; and *miremini hoc*, marvel at his speed,—he makes haste to express this love; *hora venit*; and then *miremini hoc*, marvel at the generality,—it reaches to all, all that are in the grave: 'all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,' &c. God hath made the body as a house for the soul, till he call her out, and he hath made the grave as a house for the body, till he call it up. The misery and poor estate that Christ submitted himself unto for man, was not determined in that, 'that foxes had holes, but he nowhere to lay his head,'¹ while he lived; but he had no grave that he could claim when he was dead. It is some discontinuance of the communion

¹ Matt. viii. 20.

of saints, if I may not be buried with the saints of God. Every man that hath not divested humanity, hath a desire to have his bones lie at rest; and we cannot provide for that so well, any way, as to bury them in consecrated places, which are, in common intendment, safest from profane violences. Even that respect, that his bones might lie at rest, seems to have moved one prophet to enjoin his sons to bury him in the sepulchre where the other prophet was buried.¹ He knew that Josiah would burn the bones of all the other graves, upon the altar of Bethel, as was prophesied; and he presumed that he would spare the bones of that prophet, and so his bones should be safe, if they were mingled with the other. God expressed his love to Moses, in that particular, 'that he buried him';² and, to deliver and remove him from the violence of any that loved him not, and so might dishonour his memory, and from the superstition of any that over-loved him, and so might over-honour his memory, God buried him in secret. In more than one place doth David complain, 'that there was none to bury God's saints; and the dignity ~~the~~ is promised here in the text, is appropriated to them 'who are in the graves,' who are buried.

But then, was that general? Is it simply, plainly, literally of them, and them only, who are in graves, who are buried? Shall none enjoy a resurrection that have not enjoyed a grave? Still I say, ~~it~~ is a comfort to a dying man, it is an honour to his memory, it is a discharge of a duty in his friends, it is a piece of the communion of saints, to

¹ 1 Kings, xlii. 31.² Deut. xxxiv. 6.

have a consecrated grave. But the word here is, *in monumentis*, all that are in monuments; that is, in receptacles of bodies, of what kind soever they be: wheresoever the hand of God lays up a dead body, that place is the receptacle, so the monument, so the grave of that body. 'God keeps all the bones of the righteous, so that none of them are broken.'¹ Though they be trod to dust in our sight, they are entire in his, because he can bid them be whole again in an instant. Some nations burnt their dead,—there the fire is the grave; some drowned their dead,—there the sea is the grave; and some hung them up upon trees,—and there the air is their grave. Some nations eat their dead themselves, and some maintained dogs to eat the dead;² and as they called those dogs, *canes sepulchrales*, sepulchral-dogs, so those men were sepulchral-men,—those men and those dogs were graves. 'Death and hell shall deliver up their dead,'³ says St. John. That is, the whole state and mansion of the dead shall be emptied. The state of the dead is their grave, and upon all that are in this state, shall the testimony of God's love to the body of man fall; and that is the generality, 'all that are in the grave,' &c.

Our next step is, the instrument, the means by which this, first so speedy, and then so general love of God to man, to man in his lowest part, his body, is accomplished unto him. These, all these, all these that are in graves, in all these kinds of graves, 'shall hear his voice,' and that is the means. First, whose voice? That is expressed immedi-

¹ Psalm xxxiv. 20.² Herod. Strabo.³ Rev. xx. 13.

ately before, 'the Son of man.' In the other resurrection, in that of the dead soul,¹ there it is said, 'the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God.' In this, which is the resurrection to judgment, it is 'the Son of man.' The former resurrection (that of a sinner to repentance by preaching) is wrought by a plain and ordinary means here in the church; where you do but hear a man in a pew read prayers and pronounce absolution, and a man in a pulpit preach a sermon, and a man at a table consecrate and administer a sacrament; and because all this, though it be the power of life and the means of your spiritual resurrection, is wrought by the ministry of man, who might be contemptible in your eye, therefore the whole work is referred to God, and not the Son of man, but 'the Son of God,' is said to do it.

In this resurrection of the text, which is a resurrection to judgment, and to an account with God, that God whom we have displeased, exasperated, violated, wounded in the whole course of our life, lest we should be terrified, and dejected at the presence of that God, the whole work is referred to 'the Son of man,' which hath himself formerly felt all our infirmities, and hath had as sad a soul at the approach of death, as bitter a cup in the form of death, as heavy a fear of God's forsaking him in the agony of death, as we can have: and for sin itself, I would not, I do not extenuate my sin, but let me have fallen, not seven times a day, but seventy-seven times a minute, yet what are my sins to all those sins that were upon Christ? The sins of all men, and all women, and all children; the

¹ John, v. 25.

sins of all nations, all the east and west, and all the north and south; the sins of all times and ages, of nature, of law, of grace; the sins of all natures, sins of the body, and sins of the mind; the sins of all growth, and all extensions, thoughts, and words, and acts, and habits, and delight, and glory, and contempt, and the very sin of boasting, nay of our belying ourselves in sin; all these sins, past, present, and future, were at once upon Christ, and in that depth of sin, mine are but a drop to his ocean; in that treasure of sin, mine are but single money to his talent; and therefore, that I might come with a holy reverence to his ordinance, in this place, though it be but in the ministry of man, that first resurrection is attributed to the Son of God, to give a dignity to that ministry of man, which otherwise might have been undervalued, that thereby we might have a consolation and a cheerfulness towards it. It is he, that is, the Son of God, and the Son of man, Christ; which remembers us also, that all that belongs to the expressing of the law of God to man, must be received by us, who profess ourselves Christians, in and by, and for, and through Christ.

We use to ascribe the creation to the Father, but the Father created by the word, and his word is his Son Christ. 'When he prepared the heavens, I was there, (says Christ of himself, in the person of wisdom,) and when he appointed the foundations of the earth, then was I by him, as one brought up with him: ' it is not, as one brought in to him, or brought in by him, but with him—one as old; that is, as eternal, as much God as he. We use to

¹ Prov. viii. 27.

ascribe sanctification to the Holy Ghost; but the Holy Ghost sanctifies in the church, and the church was purchased by the blood of Christ, and Christ remains head of the church, *usque in consummationem*, till the end of the world. I look upon every blessing that God affords me, and I consider whether it be temporal or spiritual; and that distinguishes the metal; the temporal is my silver, and the spiritual is my gold: but then I look again upon the inscription, *cujus imago*, whose image, whose inscription it bears, and whose name; and except I have it in, and for, and by Christ Jesus, temporal and spiritual things too are but imaginary, but illusory shadows; for God conveys himself to us no other way but in Christ.

The benefit then in our text, the resurrection, is by him; but it is limited thus, it is by hearing him: 'They that are in their graves shall hear,' &c. So it is in the other resurrection too, the spiritual resurrection.¹ There they must hear him, that will live. In both resurrections, that in the church now by grace, and that in the grave hereafter by power, it is said, 'They shall hear him.' They shall, which seems to imply a necessity, though not a coercion; but that necessity, not of equal force, not equally irresistible in both: in the grave, 'they shall,' though they be dead and senseless as the dust, (for they are dust itself,) though they bring no concurrence, no co-operation, 'they shall hear;' that is, they shall not choose but hear. In the other resurrection, which is in the church, by grace, in God's ordinance, 'they shall hear too;' that is, there shall be a voice uttered so as that

¹ John, v. 25.

they may hear, if they will, but not¹ whether they will or no, as in the other case, in the grave. Therefore, when God expresses his gathering of his church in this world, it is *sibilabo et congregabo*, 'I will hiss, or chirp for them, and so gather them.' He whispers in the voice of the Spirit, and he speaks a little louder, in the voice of a man: let the man be a *boanerges*, a son of thunder, never so powerful a speaker, yet no thunder is heard over all the world. But for the voice that shall be heard at the resurrection, 'He shall send his angels, with a great sound of a trumpet;'² a great sound, such as may be made by a trumpet, such as an angel, all his angels can make in a trumpet: and more than all that, 'The Lord himself shall descend from heaven,' and that, 'with a shout, and with the voice of an archangel;'³ "that is," says St. Ambrose, "of Christ himself;"⁴ and in the trumpet of God, that is also Christ himself.

So then you have the person, Christ; the means, a voice; and the powerfulness of that voice, in the name of an archangel, which is named but once more in all the Scriptures: and therefore, let no man that hath an holy anhelation and⁵ panting after the resurrection, suspect that he shall sleep in the dust for ever, for this is a voice that will be heard, he must rise. Let no man, who, because he hath made his course of life like a beast, would therefore be content his state in death might be like a beast too, hope that he shall sleep in the dust for ever, for this is a voice that must be heard; and

Zecha. x. 8.

² Matt. xiv. 31.³ 1 Thes. iv. 16.

all that hear ^f shall come forth, they that have done good,' &c.

'He shall come forth;' even he that hath done ill, and would not, shall come forth. You may have seen moral men, you may have seen impious men, go in confidently enough; not afrighted with death, not terrified with a grave; but when you shall see them come forth again, you shall see them in another complexion. That man that died so, with that confidence, thought death his end: it ends his seventy years, but it begins his seventy millions of generations of torments, even to the body; and he never thought of that. Indeed, *Judicii, nisi qui vitæ æternæ prædestinatus est, non potest reminisci*, says St. Ambrose; "no man can, no man dares think upon the last judgment, but he that can think upon it with comfort, he that is predestinated to eternal life." Even the best are sometimes shaken with the consideration of the resurrection, because it is impossible to separate the consideration of the resurrection from the consideration of the judgment; and the terrors of that may abate the joy of the other: *Sive comedo, sive bibo*, says St. Jerome; "Whether I eat or drink, still methinks I hear this sound," *Surgite mortui, et venite ad judicium!* "Arise ye dead, and come to judgment!" When it calls me up from death, I am glad; when it calls me to judgment, that impairs my joy. Can I think that God will not take a strict account; or, can I be without fear, if I think he will? *Non expavescere requisitum est dicere non requireret*, is excellently said by St. Bernard; "If I can put off all fear of that judgment, I have put off all imagination that any such judgment shall be." But when

I begin this fear in this life, here I end this fear in my death, and pass away cheerfully: but the wicked begin this fear, when the trumpet sounds to the resurrection, and then shall never end it; but, as a man condemned to be half-hanged and then quartered, hath a fearful addition in his quartering after, and yet had no ease in his hanging before; so they that have done ill, when they have had their hanging, when they have suffered in soul the torments of hell, from the day of their death to the day of judgment, shall come to that day with fear, as to an addition to that which yet was infinite before. And therefore the Vulgate edition hath rendered this well, *procedent*, "they shall proceed," they shall go further and further in torment.

But this is not the object of our speculation, the subject of our speculation now. We proposed this text for the contemplation of God's love to man, and therefore we rather comfort ourselves with that branch, and refresh ourselves with the shadow of that, 'that they who have done good, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life.' Alas! the others shall live as long as they. Lucifer is as immortal as Michael, and Judas as immortal as St. Peter: but *vita damnatorum mors est*,¹ that which we call immortality in the damned, is but a continual dying; howsoever it must be called life, it hath all the qualities of death, saving the ease and the end which death hath, and damnation hath not. They must come forth; they that have done evil must do so too: neither can stay in their house, their grave; for their house (though that house

¹ August.

should be the sea) shall be burnt down, all the world dissolved with fire. But then, they who have done evil shall pass from that fire into a further heat, without light; they who have done good, into a further light, without heat.

But fix upon the conditions, and perform them—they must ‘have done good:’ to have known good, to have believed it, to have intended it, nay to have preached it to others, will not serve—they must ‘have done good.’ They must be rooted in faith, and then bring forth fruit, and fruit in season; and then is the season of doing good, when another needs that good at thy hands. God gives the evening rain, but he gave the morning rain before: a good man gives at his death, but he gives in his lifetime too. To them belongs this resurrection of the body to life; upon which, since our text inclineth us to marvel rather than to discourse, I will not venture to say with David, *Narrabo omnia mirabilia tua*, ‘I will show all thy wondrous works;’¹ (an angel’s tongue could not show them;) but I will say with him, *Memmentote mirabilium*, ‘Remember the marvellous works he hath done;’² and by that God will open your eyes, that you may behold the wondrous things that he will do. Remember with thankfulness the several resurrections that he hath given you; from superstition and ignorance, in which you in your fathers lay dead; from sin, and a love of sin, in which you in the days of your youth lay dead; from sadness and dejection of spirit, in which you in your worldly crosses or spiritual tentations lay dead: and assure yourself that that God that loves to perfect his own

¹ Psalm ix. 14.² Ib. cv. 5; cxix. 18.

works, when you shall lie dead in your graves, will give you that resurrection to life which he hath promised to all them that do good, and will extend to all them who, having done evil, do yet truly repent the evil they have done.

SERMON X.

JESUS RISEN.

BY BISHOP HORNE. .

[GEORGE HORNE was born in the year 1730. In 1768 he was made President of Magdalen College, Oxford, and in 1790 was consecrated bishop of Norwich. He died in 1792.]

S E R M O N X.

LUKE, XXIV. 34.

The Lord is risen indeed.

OUR meditations for this week past have been employed on the sorrows and sufferings of the Son of God, undergone for the sins of the world. We have viewed him sold, betrayed, denied, mocked, scourged, reviled, and evil entreated, crowned with thorns, and nailed to the cross; from thence taken down and laid in the grave, as a man that had been long dead; a large stone placed at the mouth of the sepulchre, properly sealed, and the watch carefully set. During the solemn commemoration of those days, in which the bridegroom was thus taken away, the mirth of tabrets hath ceased, and the noise of them that rejoice hath given place to the penitential accents of grief and lamentation. For a little season, even the sacred music of the church hath not been heard; but her harp also, like that of holy Job, 'hath been turned to mourning, and her organ into the voice of them that weep;' while either, with one of the Marys, she

¹ Job, xxx. 31.

hath stood under the cross, or watched with the other, at the grave of her Lord.

But as a woman who in her travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come, yet afterward remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world ; with such unfeigned exultation do we on this day celebrate the second birth of the holy Jesus from the tomb ; by which he realized to his desponding disciples, in a peculiar manner, one of his own beatitudes :—‘ Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted !’ Blessed are they who have mourned for the death of Christ, and the sins which occasioned it, for they are the persons who will be comforted by the tidings of his resurrection ; their sorrow will indeed be turned into joy, when they hear that their warfare is accomplished, that their iniquity is pardoned ; since he, who died for their sins, is risen again for their justification. Deservedly, therefore, hath this ever been esteemed the queen of festivals, worthy to give laws to the rest, to appear at the head of the holy band, crowned with everlasting joy, and hailed by incessant hallelujahs. For now it well becometh us to obey that injunction, issued of old from the Lord, by his prophet Isaiah ; ‘ Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it ; shout, ye lower parts of the earth ; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein ; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.’¹ Let songs of praise, therefore, fill the heavens, from the comforted spirits of just men made perfect, of patriarchs, and prophets, and saints, upon this triumph of their God, whom they

¹ Isaiah, xliv. 23.

waited for. Let the inhabitants of the earth diffuse in loud acclamations the glorious name of the mighty Conqueror, who, by his resurrection, hath procured and given an earnest of their own. Let Mount Sion and all her sister churches break forth into singing, and utter the praises of him who hath delivered them from the curse of the law, and from the guilt of sin, and from the power of the second death, as well as from the dominion of the first. Let the Gentile world, and every tree of righteousness planted therein, burst out into fruits of praise and thanksgiving for this great manifestation of the power and glory of God, in the redemption of our nature from the grave. Such be the joy produced in heaven and in earth, among angels and men, Jews and Gentiles, by the tidings of this day, 'The Lord is risen indeed.'

The province allotted me at present is, to display the grounds and reasons of this general joy, or to state the evidence for the fact which gives occasion to it, namely, the resurrection of Jesus our Lord from the dead; which being the key-stone of the Christian fabric, and the foundation of all our hopes, it must always be a task no less profitable than delightful, to establish so important and comfortable a doctrine upon its proper basis.

The evidence for the resurrection of Christ is of two kinds, predictive and historical. From the Old Testament it appears, that Messiah was to rise; from the New, that Jesus of Nazareth did rise, and therefore is the Messiah.

Among the predictive witnesses, the first place is due to that ancient and venerable order of men, styled patriarchs, or heads of families, whose lives and actions, as well as their words, were descriptive

of the person in faith of whom they lived and acted; instructing, interceding for, and conducting their dependents, as representative prophets, priests, and kings; looking forward unto the author and finisher of their faith and ours, who by dying and rising again, was to exhibit to the world the divine fulness of all these characters; to teach, to atone, to reign; to bruise the serpent's head; to comfort the sons of Adam concerning the work and toil of their hands; to gather and to bless the nations. The extraordinary incidents with which the history of these holy persons aboundeth, the frequent revolutions of their affairs from the depth of adversity to the height of prosperity, brought about by the remarkable interpositions of heaven in their favour, naturally direct our attention to parallel circumstances, in the after dispensations of God, to which foregoing ones were designed to bear testimony. In this light, the history of Isaac, intentionally offered in sacrifice, and received again from the dead, in a figure; of Joseph, suffering persecution from his brethren, and by them sold into the hands of strangers, but afterward taken from prison and from judgment, exalted to power and honour, and becoming the preserver of men; and under the Mosaic dispensation, the history of David, anointed to the kingdom, but wading through a sea of troubles and sorrows to the possession of it; of Samson, arising at midnight, dismantling the fortifications of the city where he was confined as a prisoner, and leading captivity captive; together with the accounts of many other temporal saviours and deliverers, raised up unto Israel in time of need, to rescue them from the oppression of their enemies; all these histories have been, from the beginning,

considered as bearing an aspect to the exaltation of mankind from misery and shame to felicity and glory, through the sufferings and resurrection of the Son of God, the Champion of the church, and Redeemer of the world. And, considered in this view, they will always afford matter of instruction, of wonder, and delight to the pious and discerning Christian.

In the class of the predictive witnesses of our Lord's resurrection, the second place is claimed by the law. Nor will its claim be disputed by any one who shall reflect that it prophesied until John, executing the office of a schoolmaster, to lead men by material elements and rudiments to an apprehension of the spiritual ideas signified and conveyed thereby, until the Baptist succeeded it in that office; who, pointing to Jesus as he walked, spake the language of its institutions when he said, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.' And indeed, when, after the sacramental atonement made by the death of the innocent victim, we see the Levitical high-priest arrayed in the garments of glory and beauty; when we behold him purifying all the parts of the figurative tabernacle with blood, and then entering within the veil, into the holiest of all, to present that propitiating blood before the offended Majesty of heaven; is it possible, even though an apostle had not applied all these circumstances for us, to detain the imagination a moment from fixing itself on the great High-priest of our profession; the plenary satisfaction made on the cross; his resurrection in an immortal body, no more to stand charged with sin, no more to see corruption; the purification of the church by his precious blood,

his ascension into heaven, and intercession for us in the presence of God? Again, when we read the command given to the priest, that on the morrow after the sabbath he should wave a sheaf of the first fruits,¹ as 'an earnest and sanctification of the future harvest; doth it not immediately suggest to us, that on the same day, on the morrow after the sabbath, Christ arose from the dead, and became the first fruits of them that slept, the sanctification and earnest of that harvest which shall be at the end of the world; at which time he who, in the days of his flesh, went on weeping,—a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, bearing forth the precious seed of the word of life,—shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. Nor can we, it is apprehended, peruse the account of the flowering rod of Aaron, deposited in the most holy place for a perpetual memorial of the investiture of the priesthood in him and his family,² without being led to reflect on the ascertainment of the eternal Melchisedekian priesthood to the person of Christ, by the refluorescence of that mortal part which he drew from the stem of Jesse, and which hath now taken up its residence in heaven itself, being an everlasting memorial to God and man of the true and availing priesthood and intercession of the holy Jesus.

Next to the patriarchs and the law, the prophets press for admittance to deliver their testimony; for 'the testimony of Jesus,' as saith the angel in the Revelation, 'is the spirit of prophecy.'³ Some of these give their evidence in the ancient way of

Lev. xxiii. 11.

² See Numb. xvii.

³ Rev. xix. 10.

figure and emblem; others, with less reserve, in express literal declarations. Of the former kind is that of Jonah, devoted for the safety of the vessel in which he sailed, detained three days in what he styleth 'the belly of hell,' and then restored to the world again, to preach repentance to the heathen; a circumstance too plain and striking to need any comment, after that given by our Lord himself: 'As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.'¹ Of a like nature is that vision of Zechariah,² in which he seeth Joshua, the high-priest, clothed with filthy garments, which are taken from him, and he is clothed with change of raiment, and other sacerdotal ornaments, denoting the purity and glory of Christ, when our iniquity passed from him, and he arose, without sin, unto salvation. And thus, again, the prophecy of Haggai, that the 'glory of the latter house should be greater than that of the former,'³ is as true of the temple of our Lord's body, after his resurrection, compared with that before his death, as it is of the second material temple, compared with the first, on account of the presence of God incarnate in the one, which was not in the other. • Hosea delivers a prediction of the restoration of the church, then oppressed and afflicted, in terms literally applicable to the virtual resurrection of members in the head of the church. 'Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up; after two days he will revive us; and in the third day he will raise us up, and we

¹ Matt. xii. 40.² See Zech. iii. 3.³ Haggai, ii. 9.

shall live in his 'sight.'¹ But Isaiah is very explicit, and saith, in the person of Christ addressing himself to the church; 'Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise: awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.'² And, elsewhere, discoursing of the Messiah, he foretelleth expressly, that 'when he had made his soul an offering for sin, he should see his seed, he should prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hands: that he should see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied; that because he had poured out his soul unto death, God would afterward give him a portion with the great.'³ I shall close the predictive evidence with the famous passage from the 16th Psalm; 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption: thou wilt show me the path of life;' where, as St. Peter assureth us, in his sermon,⁴ David spake not in his own person, but, 'being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne, he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption.'

A fact of so extraordinary a nature as the resurrection of a body from the dead, predicted, as we have seen, at sundry times and in diverse manners, by the patriarchs, the law, and the prophets, cannot be supposed to have happened without suffi-

¹ Hosca, vi. 1, 2.

² Isaiah, xxvi. 19.

³ Isaiah, liii. 12.

⁴ Acts, xi.

cient witnesses of its accomplishment. These are now to be collected, and made to pass in due order before us.

And, first, we shall cite heaven and earth to give in their evidence; for both of them perceived the power of their Lord at his rising, and both proclaimed it to the inhabitants of the world, by those awful signs and appearances which ushered in the morning of the resurrection. At the time fore-appointed in the divine counsels, 'the angel of the Lord descended from heaven,' bringing with him a strange and more glorious dayspring; his brightness covering the heavens, and enlightening the world. 'His countenance,' saith St. Matthew, 'was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow;' all purity, and joy, and triumph, and glory. At this manifestation of splendour and majesty from heaven, the earth trembled and quaked, as declaring itself unable any longer to detain the body which had been committed to it for a little season: 'Behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.' At the instant of this universal commotion, the blessed Jesus, awakening right early from that which was but a sleep to him, and will be no more to us who believe in him, left the bed of death. He arose, and came forth, almighty, all-glorious, fresh as the light of the morning; as a bridegroom proceeding out of his chamber, as a strong man prepared to run his course; and saying, or seeming to say, 'I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore.'

¹ Rev. i. 13.

The next witnesses which appear in favour of the resurrection, are the holy angels. For as the devout women, who came, betimes in the morning, with a pious but needless care, to perform the last instance of duty and affection to the body of their Lord, were much perplexed at what they saw; lo, two of the inhabitants of heaven, ever rejoicing to minister to the heirs of salvation, appeared in robes of glory, and reproved them for expecting to find their Master among the tombs, as if it were possible that he should be holden of death, who was to give life to all. 'Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'¹ As if they had said, "How long will ye be ignorant of the divine dispensations concerning the Messiah, and continue seeking the Lord of life in the regions of death? He died, indeed, unto sin once, as he told you he should; but do you not bear in mind what he told you at the same time, that, after payment of the debt, he should be released from prison, naming the very day of his discharge, the third day, which is now come. He is risen, as he said; and, being so risen, he dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him, nor hath he any further connexions with mortality." The same heavenly messengers were seen by Mary Magdalen in the sepulchre, arrayed in white, and sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. The grave

¹ Luke, xxiv. 5.

was now rendered a scene of joy¹ and triumph, where Christ had overcome the sharpness of death ; and where, from thenceforth, the bodies of the faithful rest in peace, under the care of heaven, till the general resurrection ; when they shall become as the angels of God, and shall ' walk with him in white.'¹

As one set of witnesses descended from above, to bear testimony to the resurrection of Jesus, so others ascended, for the same purpose, from the lower parts of the earth. For ' many bodies of saints which slept, arose, and came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.'² The astonishment produced in Jerusalem by the sudden appearance of these new and unexpected evidences, is more easily conceived than expressed. We may only observe, that if this fact had not been as the gospel represents it, it must have exposed the inventors of the tale to utter scorn and contempt, and proved the ruin of the cause which it was intended to support.

But it is time to allege the many appearances of Christ himself, after his resurrection, to Mary Magdalen apart ; to the other devout women with her ; to the two going to Emmaus ; to St. Peter, to St. James, to the eleven ; to ' above five hundred brethren at once ;' to St. Stephen, just before his martyrdom ; and to St. Paul, at his conversion. And so far were these witnesses of the appearances of Christ from being credulous, that they were altogether sceptical ; God having in a wonderful manner provided for the confirmation of our faith,

¹ Rev. iii. 4.

² Matt. xxvii. 52.

by suffering 'them to doubt to the last. For not only the reports of those who had seen him were disbelieved by those who had not, but when he presented himself in the midst of the eleven, they could not credit their own senses. And when all the rest were convinced, 'Thomas still stood out, till ocular and palpable demonstration forced from him that ever memorable confession, 'MY LORD, AND MY GOD!' "Thus was there no capacity of mankind, no time, no place, but had visible proof of the resurrection of Christ. He appeared to men and women, to clergy and laity, to sinners of both sexes; to weak men and to criminals, to doubters and deniers, at home and abroad, in public and in private, in their houses and their journeys, unexpected and by appointment, betimes in the morning, and late at night, to his disciples in conjunction, and to them in dispersion, when they did look for him, and when they did not; he appeared upon earth to many, and to St. Paul and St. Stephen from heaven. So that we can require no greater testimony than all these are able to give us, who saw for themselves and for us too; that the faith and certainty of the resurrection of Jesus might be conveyed to all ages and generations."

To enable the apostle thus to convey it, the Spirit of truth himself set his seal to this article of our creed, by coming down upon them on the day of Pentecost, and bestowing on them wisdom to teach, power to confirm, and patience to suffer for the doctrine of the resurrection, until, converted by their preaching, the nations of the earth bore universal testimony to the reality thereof. For that "a religion which taught men to be meek and hum-

ble, disposed to receive injuries, but not to do any ; a religion which gave countenance to the poor and lowly, at a time when riches were adored, and ambition and pleasure had possessed the hearts of all mankind ; that such a religion, in such an age, by the sermons and conduct of fishermen, men of mean breeding and illiberal arts, should so speedily triumph over the philosophy of the world, and the arguments of the subtle, and the discourses of the eloquent ; the power of princes and the interests of states ; the inclinations of nature and the blindness of zeal ; the force of custom and the solicitation of passions ; the pleasures of sin and the busy arts of the devil ; that is, against wit and power, superstition and wilfulness, fame and money, nature and empire, which are all the causes in this world that can make a thing impossible ; this, this is to be ascribed to the power of God, and is the great demonstration of the resurrection of Jesus. Every thing was an argument for it, and improved it ; no objection could hinder it, no enemies destroy it ; whatsoever was for it, made the religion to increase ; whatsoever was against it, made it to increase. If the Christians had peace, they went abroad and brought in converts ; if they had persecution, the converts came in to them. In prosperity they allured and enticed the world by the beauty of holiness ; in affliction and trouble they amazed all men with the splendour of their innocence, and the glories of their patience. Quickly therefore it was, that the world became disciple to the glorious Nazarene, and men could no longer doubt of the resurrection of Jesus, when it became demonstrated by the certainty of those who saw it, and the courage of those who died for it, and the

multitude of those who believed it; who, by their sermons and their actions, by their public offices and discourses, by festivals and sacraments, by arguments of sense and experience, by reason and religion, by persuading rational men, and establishing believing Christians, by their living in the obedience, and dying for the testimony of Jesus, have greatly advanced his kingdom, and his power, and his glory, into which he entered, upon his resurrection from the dead."¹

Thus we have taken such a view, as the usual time allotted to discourses of this kind will allow us to take, of the evidence for our Lord's resurrection, predictive and historical; to the completion of which it is hard to conceive any thing wanting, unless it were the testimony of the adversary to the truth of the disputed fact, by the futility of an objection started to overthrow it. And with this proof likewise the Roman guard, under the direction of the Jewish rulers, has thought proper to furnish us.—'The disciples,' say they, 'came by night, and stole him away, while we slept.' The disciples came and stole the body! They, who all forsook their master at his apprehension, and fled; they, who, from that time, had absconded,

¹ Bishop Taylor's "Moral Demonstration of the Truth of Christianity," republished, since this Discourse was written, by a learned and amiable prelate of our church. May it meet with the success it deserves; for no tract ever came from the pen of man, better calculated to dispel those doubts and difficulties which may arise in the mind of a believer, or to work conviction and conversion in that of the unbeliever, who can bring himself to give it a fair and attentive perusal. This has ever appeared to me to be its true character, since the hour when, with equal surprise and pleasure, I first met with it, where it so long lay hidden from the fashionable world, in the *Ductor Dubitantium*.

for fear of the Jews, without hope, without courage, without contrivance, became all at once subtle in counsel, and daring in execution. They projected a plan to displace the guard, break the seal, remove the stone, and rescue the body, in order to persuade the world that their Master was risen from the dead. And all this they effected, not with the precipitation of men engaged in a bad design, who feared a discovery, and would therefore have hastily seized the body, wrapped as it was in the sepulchral vestments, but, with all the composed sedulity of domestics, carefully disentangling it from the linen clothes, and then depositing them in the exactest order. It is now proper to inquire, where were the soldiers, appointed to watch the sepulchre, all this while? What were they doing? The answer is ready;—they were asleep. Notwithstanding the rigour of the Roman discipline, and the care that would doubtless be taken to select proper men upon this great occasion, yet the disciples came and stole the body ‘while they slept.’ But, did they indeed sleep? Did they all sleep? Determine then, ye Jews and infidels, what degree of credit is due to the testimony of men concerning what happened, when, by their own confession, they were asleep! This idle tale, which thus carries its own confutation with it, could have been the offspring only of a corrupt and infatuated Sanhedrim, to whom the watch told what had happened—not that the disciples came and stole the body while they slept—but that, while they were half dead with fear, at beholding the heavens around them in a blaze of glory, and feeling the earth under them trembling from its centre, the Galilean arose from the dead, to the confusion

of all his enemies. But to stifle this evidence, and prevent the report from spreading, the soldiers had large money given them by the chief priests (and, indeed, the work deserved the wages) to propagate a story so absurd and shameless, that, instead of invalidating the truth of the resurrection, it is of itself sufficient to make any man believe it, who was before determined to the contrary.

If, therefore, the patriarchs, the law, and the prophets; if heaven and earth; if angels from above, and the dead from beneath; if the appearances of Christ himself on earth and from heaven; if the Spirit of truth, with all his gifts and graces; if the miracles of the apostles, the lives of saints, the sufferings of confessors, and the deaths of martyrs; if the conversion of the world to the faith of a crucified Saviour, without power, wealth, or learning; if the church, with the antiquity, universality, and consent of her institutions and services for above seventeen centuries, from the day on which Christ was first seen by the eleven after his resurrection, to this hour, in which we are now assembled for the commemoration of it; and, lastly, if the objections of the adversary establishing the truth which they were intended to subvert; that is to say, in one word, if all the evidence which God can give, or man receive, be sufficient to prove a matter of fact; then may we evermore rejoice,—and evermore let us therefore rejoice, in all the glorious consequences of the proposition in the text—‘The Lord is risen indeed.’

SERMON XI.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

BY BISHOP HORNE.

S E R M O N X I .

PHILIPPIANS, III. 20, 21.

From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

THE text treats of a most amazing change to be one day wrought in the bodies of men, as also of the person who is to effect it ; namely, our Lord Jesus Christ. And, indeed, ‘ we trusted it had been he who should have redeemed Israel from all his troubles.’ But, are we ‘ strangers in Jerusalem, and know not the things that have come to pass there within these days ;’ that this same Jesus, falsely accused, through envy, by the nobles of Judah, has been cast into the den of lions, with a stone brought and laid upon the mouth of the den, and sealed with a signet, that the purpose might not be changed concerning him,¹ nor any possibility remain of his escaping from thence ? In this

¹ Dan. vi. 17.

state, he is by *to* means able to perform the great work ascribed to him in the text. For it must be observed, that though he be indeed God over all, he is not, the Saviour, without his humanity. Though the raising the dead be an act of omnipotence, and consequently one which must be wrought by his divinity, yet it is not Jesus Christ that does it, unless the divinity does it in Jesus. And thus the text runs :—‘ We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus.’ But, from whence do we look for him? From the sepulchre? No: from heaven ;—‘ Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour.’ Surely then ‘ the God whom he served has delivered him from the power of the lions.’¹ Surely ‘ the king has sent and delivered him, the prince of the people has let him go free.’² ‘ He is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler : the snare is broken and he is delivered,’³ and fled away toward heaven. For how should a person, once laid in the grave, come from heaven, unless he were first risen, and ascended thither? Four days ago he was carried captive into the kingdom of death, and confined in that strong city, the grave ; and now we look for him to come from heaven. For thus doth the prophet Isaiah most magnificently describe him returning to his capital, from the land of the enemy, after his passion ;—‘ Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I who speak in righteousness mighty to save.’⁴ Well, therefore, may we ‘ look for the Saviour from hea-

¹ Dan. vi. 22, 27.² Psalm cxxiv. 7.³ Psalm, cv. 20.⁴ Isaiah, lxiii. 1.

ven,' for there most certainly he ^{is}. And from thence, as the text affirms, he shall as certainly come to raise us. He, who died on the cross to redeem, who rose from the sepulchre to justify, and who sent his Spirit from heaven to sanctify our souls, he, even he, shall come to glorify our bodies, and finish his work. And then shall we hear 'from the throne the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, it is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the water of life freely.' May we not, therefore, address the world in the words of Moses's divine song, and say, 'Give ear, O ye heavens, and he will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of his mouth. His doctrine shall drop as the rain, and his speech shall distil as the dew;' ¹ for, as it is elsewhere written, his 'dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.'² The dew, like himself, arises from earth, but we look for it from heaven; 'from whence also' we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself.'

Let us then consider Christ coming from heaven as a Saviour.

Man consists of two parts, both of which stand in need of a Saviour, because both fell, and became subject to the destroyer. The salvation here spoken of is plainly the salvation of the body, not excluding that of the soul, but perfective of it. For if Christ be here denominated a Saviour, because he

¹ Deut. xxxii. 1.

² Isaiah, xxvi. 19.

comes to change the body, then is he here spoken of as the Saviour of the body, which he comes to change. Now, a Saviour is one that delivers us from our enemies, as it is written—‘He hath raised up an horn of salvation for us,—that we should be saved from our enemies.’¹ But the enemy that destroys the body, is death; and, therefore, the body cannot be saved from that enemy without a resurrection; nor can Christ be its Saviour, unless he raise it from the death. But the apostle here styles him the Saviour, with respect to the body; therefore, he will be its ‘resurrection and its life; and whosoever believeth in him, though he were dead, yet shall he live.’

Indeed, the work of redemption is left unfinished if this be not the case. For, notwithstanding the sufferings and resurrection of Christ, ‘the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together, until now; and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit; even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body.’² ‘This, and this only, crowns and makes effectual the labours of the Redeemer. ‘For this end,’ says the apostle, ‘Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord, both of the dead and of the living.’³ And, again, ‘He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he has given assurance unto all men, in that he raised him from the dead.’⁴ Christ was incarnate, that he might die; he died, that he might rise; he arose, that he

Luke, i. 69—71.

² Rom. viii. 22.

³ Ibid. xiv. 9.

⁴ Acts, xvii. 31.

might ascend; he ascended, that he might take possession of his kingdom; and he took possession of his kingdom, that he might raise the dead and judge the world. 'The God of our fathers,' says St. Peter, 'raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, him hath God exalted with his right hand'—for what end?—'to be a Prince, and a Saviour.'¹ He, therefore, that has 'done so great things for us already, whereof we do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice,' will never leave us in our enemy's hand, but 'shall reign till he has put all enemies under his feet;' and we know, 'the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.'

Again. He who is eternal truth, and who promised to raise Christ, has promised to raise us. He has fulfilled one part of his promise, and, therefore, will accomplish the other.

Nor is this all. But such is the intimate union between Christ and us, that his resurrection in effect is ours, and we are looked upon by our heavenly Father as already risen in his beloved Son. For we must consider Christ as suffering and rising, not for himself alone, but for us. We must not view him as a private person, as a single individual, but as the representative and substitute of human nature, and of all the persons in that nature; we must view him as the second Adam, containing in his loins all who are, or shall be, born of the will of God, of incorruptible seed, by spiritual regeneration; as in the loins of the first Adam lay all his posterity, afterward born of the will of man, of corruptible seed, by natural generation. In this ca-

¹ Acts, v. 30.

capacity, as surety and father of us all, he entered the grave, and lay under the arrest of death, for our sin; and in this capacity he arose from the grave, and came forth, for our justification; that as 'in Adam all died, even so in Christ should all be made alive.' The words, therefore, which he spake are fulfilled: 'Because I live, ye shall live also.'¹ For, if Christ be risen in our nature, then our nature is risen in Christ; and if our nature be risen, then they who partake of that nature shall rise too. We are, as the apostle speaks, *συνφυτοί*, 'planted together in the likeness of his death,' that we may grow together 'in the likeness of his resurrection.' He for us, and we in him; that 'the same Spirit which raised the Lord Jesus from the dead, may also quicken our bodies.'² For who amongst us ever heard of a living head joined to dead members? Now, that he is joined to us is most certain; for when the foot was bruised on earth, the head from heaven cried out, as sensible of the pain, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' The head, lifted up from the waters which had overwhelmed it, drew in the breath of the Spirit of life, for the enlivening and invigorating every member of the body. And though the members are, as yet, wading through those waters, and being covered with the waves, live only by their vital union with the exalted head, yet have they this promise, on which they may with confidence rely: 'I, when I am lifted up, will draw all men unto me.'³ The apostle observes, that 'if any one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.'⁴ How much more

¹ John, xiv. 19.² Rom. viii. 11.³ John, xii. 32.⁴ 1 Cor. xiii. 26.

must this be the case, when 'the head is become as the most fine gold, and on it are many crowns;' when 'all the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and his Christ;' which Christ is 'the head of the church, and he is the Saviour of the body.' It is an acknowledged axiom, that as is the root such are the branches. If then the root, though set in dry ground, yet through the influences of heaven, and the water of life, became full of immortality, how shall not the branches partake of that immortality which the root receives, only to bestow it upon them, as it is written:— 'The Father hath given to the Son to have life in himself, that he should give eternal life to as many as he has given him.'¹ He is the root, we are the branches. He is the first begotten from the dead: therefore others, whom 'he is not a harned to call brethren,' shall be begotten from the dead, and declared the sons of God, as he was, by their resurrection, and the power of the Almighty. Many other Scripture illustrations of the same point might be adduced; but these are sufficient. Well then might the apostle argue, as he does, in that truly irrefragable manner: 'Now, if Christ be preached, that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead? But, if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not,

¹ John, xvii. 2.

then is not Christ raised. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they also, which are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.' The first fruits are presented by 'the great High-priest. 'The morning after the sabbath he waved them before Jehovah.' Then the heavens were bowed, and the earth shook. And meet it was, when the sheaf of Joseph thus arose and stood upright, that every sheaf in the field should make obeisance,¹ that every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord;² that he is the first fruits, foreshowing, sanctifying, and insuring that future harvest, which will be at the end of the world;³ that he is the first fruits of them that slept, and, therefore, that they who are in the graves 'are not dead, but sleep;' and 'if they sleep in him, they shall do well.' For yet a little while, and he will call from heaven to his people saying, in the words of his prophets, 'Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust,' and let the voice of melody be heard through all the chambers of the grave:—Awake up, my glory, awake lute and harp; awake, thou that sleepest; shake thyself from the dust; awake, awake, utter a song; break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? I will redeem them from death, I will ransom them from the power of the grave; O death, I will be

¹ Gen. xxxvii. 7.² Phil. ii. 10.

thy plagues, O grave, I will be thy destruction. Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes. I am Jehovah, and change not.'

But how is this salvation to be effected? The text expresses it by a change; 'Who shall change our vile body.' And otherwise than by a change from the state in which it is to one very different, the deliverance cannot be wrought; since the subject of it is a body now vile. In the original it is *σωμα της ταπεινωσεως ημων*, 'the body of our humiliation.' Humiliation implies a fall from some higher state. And such a fall our nature has sustained: for though the body of man was originally formed out of the earth, it was of the earth, before the curse of corruption was inflicted upon it.—'God created man to be immortal, and made him an image of his own eternity.' Other things were produced by the word of his power, but man by the counsel of the eternal Three, who said, 'Let us make man.' The workmanship ennobled the materials; the hand of the Almighty bestowed perfection as it passed upon them, and the creature rose under it, beautiful in his form, excellent in his glory, the most perfect image of his Maker. There was no seed of corruption within, to cause disease and deformity without; no contending passions in the soul, like moths to fret and wear out its garment, the body. The soul, clothed with the Spirit of holiness, was all glorious within, and could not but communicate some portion of its excellence to its earthly tabernacle, thereby rendering matter a fit companion for an upright spirit, breathed into it from above. God made not sin, neither hath he pleasure in the

punishment of it. But man chose it. And behold what destruction it hath brought upon the earth, and upon our body formed out of it! What dreadful attendants has this ravager of the world introduced! Corruption, and shame, and misery, and trouble, and infirmity, and deformity, and sorrow, and death. The soul is become a sea, whereon the passions, like winds, strive for the mastery, shaking the earthly frame with diverse diseases, and sundry kinds of death. It is now 'a body of sin;' and what wonder that it should be a 'body of humiliation?' Sin has laid it low, even to the dust. Pamper it with the luxuries of sea and land, array it in gold and diamonds, it will be still the same. Only undraw the curtains of affliction, and you view it languishing upon the bed of sickness; unlock the doors of the grave, or enter the secret recesses of the charnel-house, and you behold it stripped of the world's tinsel pomps and vanities, reduced to putrid flesh, mouldering dust, and dry bones; no longer able to disguise or disown its original; brought at last to know itself, and introduced to an acquaintance proper for it:—'earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.' Here, then, O thou, whosoever thou art, that delightest to contemplate the dignity and rectitude of human nature, here sit down and begin thy meditations. Is it thus that virtue is its own reward? Or say, is the body no part of the man? If it be, why is it in this state; or how is it to be changed? Men talk much of the *moral sense*. Can the *moral sense* acquaint us with the resurrection of the dead? *Reason* is placed on the throne, and her kingdom, it is said, ruleth over all. Can *reason* discover the change of corruption

into glory? We know she cannot, and when she spake upon the subject at Athens, her language was, 'What will this babbler say?'

Nay, since that time, we have heard her muttering from the dust, by the mouth of certain philosophers, 'How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?' With what body, O man, should they come, but the body with which they went? What body should be raised from the grave, but the body that was laid in the grave? Had we seen Joseph of Arimathea deposit the Redeemer of the world in the sepulchre, and been told that the Redeemer should arise again, could any one have thought of asking, 'with what body he should come?' Whether with the body which he had, when he went with his parents to Jerusalem, at twelve years old; or the body he had at twenty; or the body he had at thirty, when he began his ministry? Upon this subject two men of equal abilities might dispute, if they were to live so long, till Christ came in the clouds to judgment, and found them doubting whether he was risen or not, because they could not conceive with what body he should rise, or how it was consistent with the justice of God to raise and reward one body only, when, as they apprehend, he was born in one body, lived in another, and suffered in a third; because, it is said, the body undergoes a thorough change in a certain term of years. This metaphysical argument therefore, though seemingly no more than a difficulty proposed as to the manner of our resurrection, really strikes at the truth of the article of Christ's resurrection, and is calculated to darken the counsel and revelation of the Most High, by words without knowledge; so much without know-

ledge that the plain matter of fact is a sufficient answer. Jesus Christ was laid in the sepulchre, and the same Jesus Christ arose out of the sepulchre. And if it were so with his natural body, why should it be otherwise with his mystical? The Scriptures are clear that it will not. For as they who are alive at Christ's coming are to be 'changed in the twinkling of an eye,' and consequently that body must be changed which is found at the instant of his coming, and no other, so they that are in their graves shall come forth to be changed likewise, and consequently those bodies only must be changed that were laid in the graves. 'Who shall change our vile body,' says the text; therefore the vile body must be there to be changed: otherwise it would not be a *change*, μετασχηματισμός, a *transformation*, or *transfiguration* of vile into glorious, but a *substitution* of glorious for vile. It is *this* mortal, and *this* corruptible—τοῦτο το θνητόν—this very mass of mortality and corruption. 'It is sown, it is raised.' The same, in short, may be said to these objectors which Christ said to the Sadducees upon a like occasion: 'Ye do greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.' For if you knew the power of God, you would know that he *can* do it; and if you knew the Scriptures, you would know that he *will* do it. And if they say he will do it, all the objections in the world show but one thing, namely an evil heart of unbelief in the objectors. For since the Scriptures (and particularly the process in Ezekiel's vision of the resurrection) plainly show, that the body is first to be raised, and all the parts of it put together, before the change takes place, nothing remains but an atheistical denial of *the power of God* to collect

the parts and put them together; a denial, that he who made all things of impalpable dust, and beheld the substance of the world before two atoms of it were joined; who formed the body of man out of those created for that purpose, and dissolves and disperses them at pleasure; a denial that he can collect them again when dispersed; a denial that the Almighty can do this. Only suppose a man not ignorant of the power of God, and all difficulties vanish. For then, whether the dust lie quiet in the grave, or be blown to the four winds, or be entombed in a whale, or buried in the great deep, it is equally under the eye of the Omniscient, and the power of the Omnipotent. These are all his store-houses and repositories, to be opened by him who has the keys of hell and death, when the sea shall deliver up the dead that are in it, and death and hell deliver up the dead that are in them; when, as the same *John* came out of the whale, and the same Son of Man from the heart of the earth, so the same bodies of saints, that laid down at night, shall arise in the morning. God is not unrighteous, that he should forget the body's work and labour of love. From those eyes, which have poured forth tears of repentance, shall all tears be wiped, and they shall be blessed with the vision of the Almighty. Those hands which have been lifted up in prayer, and stretched out to the poor, shall hold the palm of victory and harp of joy. Those feet which have wearied themselves in going about to do good, shall stand in the courts of the Lord, and walk in the garden of God, and in the streets of the New Jerusalem. That flesh which has been chastised and mortified, shall be rewarded for what it has suffered; nay, the very hairs of our heads are all numbered; how much more then the

parts of our bodies? 'This,' says *the Resurrection* himself, 'is my Father's will that has sent me, that of ALL which he has given me, ΠΑΝ ὃ δέδωκε μοι, I shall lose nothing, but 'raise it up at the last day.' We might indeed follow the objectors to the resurrection into the cold obscure of metaphysics. But what has been alleged from the Scriptures, and the power of God revealed in those Scriptures, (the only topics of argumentation upon subjects of this nature,) overturns the foundation of every thing the objectors have to offer; and it will, I presume, be much more profitable to lay open from the Scriptures the manner in which this change is to be wrought.

The greatness of the change appears from this, that 'our vile body' is to be 'fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body.' Of this he was pleased to give a specimen to Peter and James and John, and in them to all his disciples, who, by faith and devotion will accompany their Master, in 'the body of his humiliation,' to the top of Mount Tabor. There they may behold an ensample of this most amazing change; the power of the Highest, which dwelt in Christ, diffusing itself outwardly, till he appeared all over exceeding glorious, his face shining like the sun, and his raiment becoming white as the light.² Who is not ready to say, 'It is good for us to be here, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, even the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ?' But here we must not stay, because he did not. For though, at the bright-

¹ John, vi. 39.

² See the resurrection of the body, in an ingenious and beautiful manner illustrated from the transfiguration of Christ, by the Reverend Mr. Holmes, in his excellent Sermon on that subject.

ness before him, the cloud passed, and the sun, for a little while, appeared in his strength, the cloud soon returned and overshadowed him, and he entered into it. He descended from the mount of transfiguration to the heart of the earth, and then 'there was darkness over all the land;' but he soon went up to an higher mountain than Tabor, was again transfigured, and introduced a day which no cloud shall ever overcast more. He became, as it was foretold that he should do, 'as the light of the morning when the sun arises, even a morning without clouds.'¹ The world, indeed sees him not; but to us, who believe, 'a door is opened in heaven, and behold a throne set, like the fiery flame, and its wheels as burning fire, and one sits on it, to look upon, like a jasper and a sardine stone; his garment white as snow, and the hairs of his head like the pure wool; his eyes as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and his countenance as the sun shineth in his strength.'² 'Beloved,' says St. John, 'it does not yet appear what we shall be; but this we know, that 'when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is, and by seeing him, be transformed into the same image, from glory to glory.' He has power, as the text informs us, to subdue all things to himself, because he is the Almighty God, and this power he will exert on our bodies. Yet a little while, and he will rend the heavens, and come down, and heaven and earth will be filled with the overflowing flood of the majesty of his glory, 'as the waters cover the sea; the heavens over our heads melting away before it,

¹ 2 Sam. xxiii. 4.

² Dan. vii. 9; x. 6; Rev. i. 14.

and the mountains flowing down, in liquid fire, at its presence. At that instant—"when the shriek of millions, fearfully crying out, shall mingle with the trumpet of the archangel, with the thunders of the departing heavens, and the noise of a world shaking into dissolution"—at that instant, 'the dead shall be raised, and we shall be changed.' Changed—not by the corruptible being taken away, and the incorruptible introduced in its room, but by a superinduction of the incorruptible upon the corruptible. For thus says the apostle, 'We that are in this tabernacle do groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. Not for that we would be unclothed, but lose the earthly body, 'but clothed upon,' with a superinvestiture of the house from heaven, namely, the divine light, which is to inwrap and invest the mortal body as a garment. And not only invest it outwardly, as a garment, but, by the divine energy of its almighty power, penetrate and pierce through and through its most intimate substance, till it has converted, subdued, worked, and changed it all into itself, so that mortality is swallowed up of life, and corruption quite absorbed and lost in the ocean of the all-encircling glory. Then shall the righteous be seen standing victorious, through faith in Jesus, transformed (to compare the things of this world with those of another) from the darkness of dust and ashes, to the clear transparency of glass, the pure lustre of diamonds, the inconceivable agility of light, and the perfect impassibility of heaven. No reasonable man can complain, that the Scriptures are not explicit enough upon the subject. But the transformation of mortality into glory is one of those things of God, which the

natural man never will know or discern. Though surely, if nature teach any religion, it is the Christian; if she preach any doctrine, it is this resurrection and change. And was not the book of nature, as well as that of grace, become a sealed book, what man, that ever travelled with the earth through the vicissitudes of a year, could deny a resurrection? Ask the furrows of the field, and they shall tell thee. For 'except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' The parts of the seed cannot spring afresh, till they have been first dissolved. It is true, the husbandman seeth only bare grain; but it arises, 'clothed upon' with a beautiful verdure. And 'if God so clothe the grass of the field, how much more shall he clothe your mortal bodies with a glorious immortality, O ye of little faith.' But why need we take the compass of a year? Every twenty-four hours there is a rehearsal, in nature, of man's death and resurrection. Every evening, the day, with its works, dies into darkness and the shadow of death. All colours fade, all beauty vanishes, all labour and motion cease, and every creature veiled in darkness, mourns, in solemn silence, the interment of the world. Who would not say, 'It is dead—it shall not rise!' Yet, wait only a few hours, in faith and patience, and this dead and entombed earth, by the agency of heaven upon it, shall burst asunder the bars of that sepulchral darkness, in which it was imprisoned, and 'arise and be enlightened, and its light shall come; the dayspring from on high shall visit it, and destroy the covering cast over all people,' and array universal nature with a robe of glory and beauty,

raising those that sleep, to behold themselves and the world changed from darkness to light, and calling them up, to give glory to God and think of the resurrection. Happy are they who make this use of it! God shall help them, when that morning appeareth, of which every morning has been to them a blessed prelude: to such, day unto day uttereth the word of the everlasting gospel, and night unto night showeth the knowledge of salvation. They understand how 'the heavens declare the glory of God' in the felicity of his chosen, and furnish us with some ideas of our approaching glorification. Nothing earthly can fully represent that which is changed from earthly to heavenly; for 'the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon; and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead.' There is one glory of the Sun of righteousness, another glory of the moon, his church, walking in the brightness she receives from him, and another glory of the stars, his saints; for here also one star differeth from another star in glory. All stand in their order, in shining circles, round the throne of the sun. There these morning stars sing together unto the Lord a new song, and all the sons of God, even the children of the resurrection, shout for joy; for they rest not day or night, making one sound to be heard through all the heavenly courts—Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come! Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord, Most High!

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, seeing these

bodies of ours are to become instruments of glory hereafter, how ought they to be instruments of grace here? for grace is the dawn of glory, as glory is the meridian of grace. Seeing we are to have such bodies, what ought our souls to be, for whom such bodies are prepared? And how ought we to spend our short moment of probation in 'cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God!' The consideration of our glorious change cannot but make our hearts to burn within us. And then is the time to reflect, that blessed is he, whose soul is changed from grace to grace, for his body shall be changed from glory to glory. And if the soul of a Christian be ever 'transformed by the renewing of his mind,' it must be, not while he is in the hurry and vanity of the world below, but when he leaves the world, and, following the steps of his dear Lord and Master, ascends, by faith, to the mount of transfiguration, and is on his knees before God, remembering it is written, 'While he prayed, he was transfigured.' Blessed, therefore, is he who breaks away from idle and vain conversation, to meditate in the law of God day and night; to commune with his own heart, and in his chamber; to call his past ways to remembrance, in the bitterness of his soul; to confess his wickedness, and be sorry for his sin. 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth,' says the world. 'Blessed are they that mourn,' says he, whom the world crucified. Let those, therefore, who enjoy a life of perfect leisure, and are continually complaining how heavy time hangs upon their hands, consider, whether they could tell, if God should call upon them at this moment, when they ever freely and voluntarily

withdrew for one hour, to attend the business of changing their souls from sin to righteousness, that so their bodies may be changed from dust to glory? And if this question, from the mouth of the all-seeing Judge, will strike the unprofitable servant speechless at his footstool, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Let us consider this, and be wise unto salvation, and, in every thought, word, and action, remember our latter end. Let us remember, that 'our Redeemer liveth, and that he shall indeed stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after our skin, worms destroy this body, yet in this flesh shall we see God.' And may we so 'look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ,' by the eye of faith, that when we see him as he is, he may 'change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself.'

SERMON XII.
THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

BY THE

REV. JOHN WESLEY, M. A

JOHN WESLEY, born 1703, died 1791.

S E R M O N X I I.

1 COR. XV. 35.

*But some man will say, How are the dead raised up?
and with what body do they come?*

THE apostle having, in the beginning of this chapter, firmly settled the truth of our Saviour's resurrection, adds, 'Now, if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead?' It cannot now any longer seem impossible to you that God should raise the dead, since you have so plain an example of it in our Lord, who was dead and is alive; and the same power which raised Christ, must also be able to quicken our mortal bodies.

'But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?' How can these things be? How is it possible that these bodies should be raised again, and joined to their several souls, which many thousand years ago were either buried in the earth, or swallowed up in the sea, or devoured by fire; which have mouldered into the finest dust, that dust scattered over the face of the earth, dispersed as far as the hea-

vens are wide; nay, which has undergone ten thousand changes, has fattened the earth, become the food of other creatures, and these again the food of other men? How is it possible that all these little parts, which made up the body of Abraham, should be again ranged together, and, unmixed with the dust of other bodies, be all placed in the same order and posture that they were before, so as to make up the very self-same body which his soul at his death forsook? Ezekiel was indeed, in a vision, set down in a valley full of dry bones, ‘and he heard a noise, and beheld a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone; the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them above, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet.’ This might be in a vision. But that all this, and much more, should in time come to pass; that our bones, after they are crumbled into dust, should really become living men; that all the little parts whereof our bodies were made, should immediately, at a general summons, meet again, and every one challenge and possess its own place, till at last the whole be perfectly rebuilt; that this, I say, should be done, is so incredible a thing, that we cannot so much as have any notion of it. And we may observe, that the Gentiles were most displeased with this article of the Christian faith: it was one of the last things the heathens believed; and it is to this day the chief objection to Christianity, ‘How are the dead raised up? With what body do they come?’ In my discourse on these words, I shall do three things:—

I. I shall show that the resurrection of the self-same body that died and was buried, contains nothing in it incredible, or impossible.

II. I shall describe the difference which our Saviour makes between the qualities of a glorified and a mortal body. .

III. I shall draw some inferences from the whole.

I. I shall show, that the resurrection of the self-same body that died contains nothing in it incredible or impossible.

But before I do this, it may be proper to mention some of the reasons upon which this article of our faith is built.

And, 1. The plain notion of a resurrection, requires that the self-same body that died should rise again. Nothing can be said to be raised again, but that very body that died. If God give to our souls at the last day a new body, this cannot be called the resurrection of our body, because that word plainly implies the fresh production of what was before.

2. There are many places of Scripture that plainly declare it. St. Paul, in the 53d verse of this chapter, tells us, that 'this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.' Now, by this mortal, and this corruptible, can only be meant that body which we now carry about with us, and shall one day lay down in the dust. .

The mention which the Scripture makes of the places where the dead shall rise, further shows that the same body which died shall arise. Thus we read in Daniel, 'Those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.' And we may likewise observe that the very phrase—of sleep and awake, implies, that when we rise again from the dead, our bodies will be as much the same as

they are when we awake from sleep. Thus again our Lord affirms, 'The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation.'¹ Now, if the same body do not rise again, what need is there of opening the graves at the end of the world? The graves can give up no bodies but those which were laid in them. If we were not to rise with the very same bodies that died, then they might rest for ever. To this we need only to add that of St. Paul, 'The Lord shall change this vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.' Now this vile body can be no other than that with which we are now clothed, which must be restored to life again.

That in all this there is nothing incredible or impossible, I shall show, by proving these three things:—1. That it is possible for God to keep and preserve unmixed from all other bodies, the particular dust into which our several bodies are dissolved, and can gather and join it again, how far soever dispersed asunder. 2. That God can form that dust so gathered together, into the same body it was before. 3. That when he hath formed this body, he can enliven it with the same soul that before inhabited it.

1. God can distinguish and keep unmixed from all other bodies, the particular dust into which our several bodies are dissolved, and can gather it together and join it again, how far soever dispersed asunder. God is infinite both in knowledge and

¹ John, v. 28.

power. He knoweth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names; he can tell the number of the sands on the sea-shore: and is it at all incredible that he should distinctly know the several particles of dust into which the bodies of men are mouldered, and plainly discern to whom they belong, and the various changes they have undergone? Why should it be thought strange, that he, who at the first formed us,—whose eyes saw our substance, yet being imperfect, from whom we were not hid when we were made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth,—should know every part of our bodies, and every particle of dust whereof we were composed? The artist knows every part of the watch which he frames, and if it should fall in pieces, and the various parts of it lie in the greatest disorder and confusion, yet he can soon gather them together, and as easily distinguish one from another as if every one had its particular mark. He knows the use of each, and can readily give it its proper place, and put them all exactly in the same figure and order they were before: and can we think that the almighty Builder of the world, whose workmanship we are, does not know whereof we are made, or is not acquainted with the several parts of which this earthly tabernacle is composed? All these lay in one vast heap at the creation, till he separated them one from another, and framed them into those distinct bodies whereof this beautiful world consists; and why may not the same power collect the ruins of our corrupted bodies, and restore them to their former condition? All the parts into which men's bodies are dissolved, however they seem to us carelessly scattered over the face of the earth, are yet

carefully laid up, by God's wise disposal till the day of the restoration of all things. They are preserved in the waters and fires, in the birds and beasts, till the last trumpet shall summon them to their former habitation.

But, say they, "It may sometimes happen that several men's bodies may consist of the selfsame matter; for the bodies of men are often devoured by other animals, which are eaten by other men: nay, there are nations which feed upon human flesh, consequently they borrow a great part of their bodies from other men; and if that which was part of one man's body becomes afterwards part of another man's, how can both rise at the last day with the same bodies they had before?" To this it may easily be replied, that a very small part of what is eaten turns to nourishment, the far greater part goes away according to the order of nature: so that it is not at all impossible for God, who watches over and governs all this, so to order things, that what is part of one man's body, though eaten by another, shall never turn to his nourishment; or, if it does, that it shall wear off again, and some time before his death be separated from him, so that it may remain in a capacity of being restored at the last day to its former owner.

2. God can form this dust, so gathered together, into the same body it was before; and that it is possible, all must own who believe that God made Adam out of the dust of the earth: therefore, the bodies of men being dust after death, it is no other than it was before; and the same power that at the first made it of dust, may as easily remake it, when it is turned into dust again: nay, it is no more wonderful than the forming of a human body

in the womb, which is a thing we have daily experience of, and is doubtless as strange an instance of divine power as the resurrection of it can possibly be; and were it not so common a thing, we should be as hardly brought to think it possible, that such a beautiful fabric as the body of man is, with nerves and bones, flesh and veins, blood, and the several other parts whereof it consists, should be formed, as we know it is, as now we are, that hereafter it should be rebuilt, when it has been crumbled into dust. Had we only heard of the wonderful production of the bodies of men, we should have been as ready to ask, How are men made, and with what bodies are they born? as now, when we hear of the resurrection, 'How are the dead raised up, and with what bodies do they come?'

3. When God hath raised this body, he can enliven it with the same soul that inhabited it before; and this, we cannot pretend to say, is impossible to be done, for it has been done already: our Saviour himself was dead, rose again, and appeared alive to his disciples and others, who had lived with him many years, and were then fully convinced that he was the same person they had seen die upon the cross.

Thus have I shown, that the resurrection of the same body is by no means impossible to God; that what he hath promised he is able to perform, by that mighty power by which he is able to subdue all things to himself. Though, therefore, we cannot exactly tell the manner how it shall be done, yet this ought not in the least to weaken our belief of this important article of our faith; it is enough that he, to whom all things are possible, hath passed his word that he will raise us again: Let

those who presume to mock at the glorious hope of all good men, and are constantly raising objections against it, first try their skill upon the various appearances of nature. Let them explain every thing which they see happen in this world, before they talk of the difficulties of explaining the resurrection. Can they tell me how their own bodies were fashioned and curiously wrought? Can they give me a plain account by what orderly steps this glorious, stately structure, which discovers so much workmanship and rare contrivance, was at first created? How was the first drop of blood made, and how came the heart, and veins, and arteries to receive it? Of what, and by what means, were the nerves and fibres made? What fixed the little springs in their due places, and fitted them for the several uses for which they now serve? How was the brain distinguished from the other parts of the body, and filled with spirits to move and animate the whole? How came the body to be fenced with bones and sinews, to be clothed with skin and flesh, distinguished into various muscles? Let them but answer these few questions about the mechanism of our own bodies, and I will answer all the difficulties concerning the resurrection of them. But if they cannot do this without having recourse to the infinite power and wisdom of the First Cause, let them know that the same power and wisdom can reanimate it after it is turned into dust; and that there is no reason for our doubting concerning the thing because there are some circumstances belonging to it which we cannot perfectly comprehend, or give a distinct account of.

II. I now proceed to the second thing I proposed, which was, to describe the difference the

Scripture makes between the qualities of a mortal and of a glorified body.

The change which shall be made in our bodies at the resurrection, according to the Scripture account, will consist chiefly in these four things: 1, That our bodies shall be raised immortal and incorruptible. 2, That they shall be raised in glory. 3, That they shall be raised in power. 4, That they shall be raised spiritual bodies.

1. The body that we shall have at the resurrection shall be immortal and incorruptible: 'for this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.' Now, these words, 'immortal' and 'incorruptible,' not only signify that we shall die no more, (for, in that sense, the damned are immortal and incorruptible,) but that we shall be perfectly free from all the bodily evils which sin brought into the world; that our bodies shall not be subject to sickness or pain, or any other inconvenience we are daily exposed to. This the Scripture calls, 'the redemption of our bodies;' the freeing them from all their maladies. Were we to receive them again subject to all the frailties and miseries which we are forced to wrestle with, I much doubt whether a wise man, were he left to his choice, would willingly take his again; whether he would not choose to let his still lie rotting in the grave, rather than to be again chained to such a cumbersome clod of earth. Such a resurrection would be, as a wise heathen calls it, 'a resurrection to another sleep.' It would look more like a redemption to death again, than a resurrection to life.

The best thing we can say of this house of earth

is, that it is a ruinous building, and will not be long before it tumbles into dust ; that it is not our home ; we look for another house, eternal in the heavens ; that we shall not always be confined here, but that in a little time we shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, from this burden of flesh, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. What frail things these bodies of ours are ! How soon are they disordered ! To what a troop of diseases, pains, and other infirmities are they constantly subject ! And how does the least distemper disturb our minds, and make life itself a burden ! Of how many parts do our bodies consist ! And, if one of these be disordered, the whole man suffers. If but one of these slender threads, whereof our flesh is made up, be stretched beyond its due proportion, or fretted by any sharp humour, or broken, what torment does it create ! Nay, when our bodies are at the best, what pains do we take to answer their necessities, to provide for their sustenance, to preserve them in health, and to keep them tenantable, in some tolerable fitness for our souls' use. And what time we can spare from our labour, is taken up in rest and refreshing our jaded bodies, and fitting them for work again. How are we forced, even naturally, into the confines of death ; even to cease to be ; at least to pass so many hours without any useful or reasonable thoughts, merely to keep them in repair ? But our hope and comfort is, that we shall shortly be delivered from this burden of flesh ; when ' God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are

passed away.' O when shall we arrive at that happy land, where no complaints were ever heard, where we shall all enjoy uninterrupted health both of body and mind, and never more be exposed to any of those inconveniences that disturb our present pilgrimage ! When we shall have once passed from death unto life, we shall be eased of all the troublesome care of our bodies, which now takes up so much of our time and thoughts ; we shall be set free from all those mean and tiresome labours which we must now undergo to support our lives. Yon robes of light, with which we shall be clothed at the resurrection of the just, will not stand in need of those careful provisions which it is so troublesome to us here either to procure or to be without : but then, as our Lord tells us, ' those who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, neither marry nor are given in marriage, neither can they die any more ; but they are equal to the angels.' Their bodies are neither subject to disease, nor want their daily sustenance, which these mortal bodies cannot be without. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats ; but God will destroy both it and them. This is that perfect happiness which all good men shall enjoy in the other world : a mind free from all trouble and guilt, in a body free from all pains and diseases. Thus our mortal bodies shall be raised immortal : they shall not only be always preserved from death, (for so these might be, if God pleased,) but the nature of them shall be wholly changed, so that they shall not retain the same seeds of mortality : they cannot die any more.

2. Our bodies shall be raised in glory : ' Then shall the righteous shine as the sun in the kingdom

of their Father.' • A resemblance of this we have in the lustre of Moses's face when he had conversed with God on the mount: his face shone so bright, that the children of Israel were afraid to come near him, 'till he threw a veil over it. And that extraordinary majesty of Stephen's face seemed to be an earnest of this glory: 'All that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.' How, then, if it shone so gloriously even on earth, will it shine in the other world, when his, and the bodies of all the saints, are made like unto Christ's glorious body? How glorious the body of Christ is, we may guess from the transfiguration. St. Peter, when he saw this, when our Lord's face shone as the sun, and his raiment became shining and white as snow, was so transported with joy and admiration, that he knew not what he said. When our Saviour discovered but a little of that glory which he now possesses, and which in due time he will impart to his followers, yet that little of it made the place seem a paradise; and the disciples thought that they could wish for nothing better than always to live in such pure light, and enjoy so beautiful a sight: 'It is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles.' Here let us fix our abode for ever.' And if they thought it so happy only to be present with such heavenly bodies, and to behold them with their eyes, how much happier must it be to dwell in such glorious mansions, and to be themselves clothed with so much brightness!

This excellency of our heavenly bodies will probably arise, in a great measure, from the happiness of our souls. The unspeakable joy that we then

shall feel, will break through our bodies, and shine forth in our countenances. As the joy of the soul, even in this life, has some influence upon the countenance, by rendering it more open and cheerful; so Solomon tells us, 'A man's wisdom makes his face to shine.' Virtue, as it refines a man's heart, so it makes his very looks more cheerful and lively.

3. Our bodies shall be raised in power. This expresses the sprightliness of our heavenly bodies, the nimbleness of their motion, by which they shall be obedient and able instruments of the soul. In this state our bodies are no better than clogs and fetters, which confine and restrain the freedom of the soul: the corruptible body presses down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weighs down the mind; our dull, sluggish, inactive bodies, are often unable or backward to obey the commands of the soul: but in the other life, 'they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.' Or, as another expresses it, 'they shall run to and fro like sparks among the stubble.' The speed of their motion shall be like that of devouring fire in stubble, and the height of it above the towering of an eagle; for they shall meet the Lord in the air, when he comes to judgment, and mount up with him into the highest heaven. This earthly body is slow and heavy in all its motions, listless and soon tired with action; but our heavenly bodies shall be as fire, as active and as nimble as our thoughts are.

4. Our bodies shall be raised spiritual bodies. Our spirits are now forced to serve our bodies, and

to attend their leisure, and do greatly depend upon them for most of their actions: but our bodies shall then wholly serve our spirits, and minister to them, and depend upon them. So that, as by a natural body we understand one fitted for this lower, sensible world, for this earthly state; so a spiritual body is one that is suited to a spiritual state, to an invisible world, to the life of angels; and, indeed, this is the principal difference between a mortal and a glorified body. This flesh is the most dangerous enemy we have: we therefore defy and renounce it in our baptism. It constantly tempts us to evil. Every sense is a snare to us. All its lusts and appetites are inordinate. It is ungovernable, and often rebels against reason. The law in our members wars against the law of our mind. When the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak; so that the best of men are forced to keep it under, and use it hardly, lest it should betray them into folly and misery. And how does it hinder us in all our devotions! How soon does it jade our minds when employed on holy things! How easily, by its enchanting pleasures, does it divert them from those noble exercises! But when we obtain the resurrection unto life, our bodies will be spiritualized, purified, and refined from their earthly grossness; then they will be fit instruments for the soul in all its divine and heavenly employment; we shall not be weary of singing praises to God through infinite ages.

Thus, after what little we have been able to conceive of it, it sufficiently appears, that a glorified body is infinitely more excellent and desirable than this vile body. The one thing that remains is,

III. To draw some inferences from the whole.

And, 1st. From what has been said, we may learn the best way of preparing ourselves to live in those heavenly bodies, which is, by cleansing ourselves more and more from all earthly affections, and weaning ourselves from this body, and all the pleasures that are peculiar to it. We should begin in this life to loosen the knot between our souls and this mortal flesh; to refine our affections, and raise them from things below to things above; to take off our thoughts, and disengage them from present and sensible things, and accustom ourselves to think of and converse with things future and invisible; that so our souls, when they leave this earthly body, may be prepared for a spiritual one, as having beforehand tasted spiritual delights, and being in some degree acquainted with the things which we then shall meet with. A soul wholly taken up with this earthly body, is not fit for the glorious mansions above. A sensual mind is so wedded to bodily pleasures, that it cannot enjoy itself without them, and it is not able to relish any other, though infinitely to be preferred before them; nay, such as follow the inclinations of their fleshly appetites, are so far unfit for heavenly joys, that they would esteem it the greatest unhappiness to be clothed with a spiritual body; it would be like clothing a beggar in the robes of a king: such glorious bodies would be uneasy to them; they would not know what to do in them; they would be glad to retire, and put on their rags again. But when we are washed from the guilt of our sins, and cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, then we shall long to be dissolved, and to be with our exalted Saviour. We shall be always ready to take wing for the

other world, where we shall at last have a body suited to our spiritual appetites.

2. From hence we may see how to account for the different degrees of glory in the heavenly world; for, although all the children of God shall have glorious bodies, yet the glory of them all shall not be equal. As one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead. They shall all shine as stars; but those who, by a constant diligence in well-doing, have attained to a higher measure of purity than others, shall shine more bright than others; they shall appear as more glorious stars. It is certain that the most heavenly bodies will be given to the most heavenly souls, so that this is no little encouragement to us to make the greatest progress we possibly can in the knowledge and love of God, since the more we are weaned from the things of the earth now, the more glorious will our bodies be at the resurrection.

3. Let this consideration engage us patiently to bear whatever troubles we may be exercised with in the present life. The time of our eternal redemption draweth nigh; let us hold out a little longer, and all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and we shall never sigh nor sorrow any more; and how soon shall we forget all we endured in this earthly tabernacle, when once we are clothed with that house which is from above? We are now but on our journey towards home, and so must expect to struggle with many difficulties; but it will not be long ere we come to our journey's end, and that will make amends for all. We shall then be in a quiet and safe harbour, out of the reach of all storms and dangers: we shall then be at home in

our Father's house, no longer exposed to the inconveniences which, so long as we abide abroad in these tents, we are subject to; and let us not forfeit all this happiness for want of a little more patience. Only let us hold out to the end, and we shall receive an abundant recompense for all the trouble and uneasiness of our passage, which shall be endless rest and peace.

Let this especially fortify us against the fear of death: it is now disarmed, and can do us no hurt. It divides us, indeed, from this body awhile, but it is only that we may receive it again more glorious. As God, therefore, said once to Jacob, 'Fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will go down with thee, and will surely bring thee up again;' so I may say to all who are born of God, Fear not to go down into the grave; lay down your heads in the dust, for God will certainly bring you up again, and that in a much more glorious manner; only be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, and then let death prevail over and pull down this house of clay, since God hath undertaken to rear it up again, infinitely more beautiful, strong, and useful.

SERMON XIII.
CHRIST'S COMING TO JUDGMENT.
BY BISHOP HORSLEY.*

[SAMUEL HORSLEY was born in 1733. He was made Bishop of St. David's in 1788; was translated to St. Asaph in 1802; and died in 1806.]

S E R M O N X I I I .

JAMES, v. 8.

For the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

TIME was, when I know not what mystical meanings were drawn, by a certain cabalistic Alchymy, from the simplest expressions of Holy Writ,—from expressions in which no allusion could reasonably be supposed to any thing beyond the particular occasion upon which they were introduced. While this frenzy raged among the learned, visionary lessons of divinity were often derived, not only from detached texts of Scripture, but from single words,—not from words only, but from letters—from the place, the shape, the posture of a letter: and the blunders of transcribers, as they have since proved to be, have been the groundwork of many a fine-spun meditation.

It is the weakness of human nature, in every instance of folly, to run from one extreme to its opposite. In later ages, since we have seen the futility of those mystic expositions in which the school of Origen so much delighted, we have been too apt to fall into the contrary error; and the

same unwarrantable license of figurative interpretation which they employed to elevate, as they thought, the plainer parts of Scripture, has been used, in modern times, in effect to lower the divine.

Among the passages which have been thus misrepresented by the refinements of a false criticism, are those which contain the explicit promise of the 'coming of the Son of man in glory, or in his kingdom;' which it is become so much the fashion to understand of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman arms, within half a century after our Lord's ascension, that to those who take the sense of Scripture from some of the best modern expositors, it must seem doubtful whether any clear prediction is to be found in the New Testament of an event in which, of all others, the Christian world is most interested.

As I conceive the right understanding of this phrase to be of no small importance, seeing the hopes of the righteous and the fears of the wicked rest chiefly on the explicit promises of our Saviour's coming, it is my present purpose to give the matter, as far as my abilities may be equal to it, a complete discussion; and although, from the nature of the subject, the disquisition must be chiefly critical, consisting in a particular and minute examination of the passages wherein the phrase in question occurs, yet I trust, that, by God's assistance, I shall be able so to state my argument, that every one here, who is but as well versed as every Christian ought to be in the English Bible, may be a very good judge of the evidence of my conclusion. If I should sometimes have occasion, which will be but seldom, to appeal to the Scrip-

tures in the original language, it will not be to impose a new sense upon the texts which I may find it to my purpose to produce; but to open and ascertain the meaning, where the original expressions may be more clear and determinate than those of our translation. • And in these cases, the expositions which grammatical considerations may have suggested to me, will be evinced to you, by the force and perspicuity they may give to the passages in question, considered either in themselves or in the connexion with their several contexts.

It is the glory of our church, that the most illiterate of her sons are in the possession of the Scriptures in their mother tongue. It is their duty to make the most of so great a blessing, by employing as much time as they can spare from the necessary business of their several callings, in the diligent study of the written word. It is the duty of their teachers to give them all possible assistance and encouragement in this necessary work. I apprehend that we mistake our proper duty, when we avoid the public discussion of difficult or ambiguous texts; and either keep them entirely out of sight, or, when that cannot easily be done, obtrude our interpretations upon the laity, as magisterial or oracular, without proof or argument; a plan that may serve the purposes of indolence, and may be made to serve worse purposes, but is not well adapted to answer the true ends of the institution of our holy order. The will of God is, that all men should be saved; and to that end, it is his will that all men, that is, all descriptions of men, great and small, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, should come to the knowledge of the truth. Of the truth—that is, of the truths brought to light by the gos-

pel : not only of the fundamental truths of faith toward God, of repentance from dead works, and of a future judgment ; but of all the sublimer truths concerning the scheme of man's redemption. It is God's will that all men should be brought to a just understanding of the deliverance Christ hath wrought for us ; to a just apprehension of the magnitude of our hopes in him, and of the certainty of the evidence on which these hopes are founded. It is God's will that all men should come to a knowledge of the original dignity of our Saviour's person ; of the mystery of his incarnation ; of the nature of his eternal priesthood, the value of his atonement, the efficacy of his intercession. These things are never to be understood without much more than a superficial knowledge of the Scriptures, especially the Scriptures of the New Testament ; and yet that knowledge of the Scriptures which is necessary to the understanding of these things, is what few, I would hope, in this country, are too illiterate to attain. It is our duty to facilitate the attainment by clearing difficulties. It may be proper to state those we cannot clear ; to present our hearers with the interpretations that have been attempted, and to show where they fail ;—in a word, to make them masters of the question, though neither they nor we may be competent to the resolution of it. This instruction would more effectually secure them against the poison of modern corruptions, than the practice, dictated by a false discretion, of avoiding the mention of every doctrine that may be combated ; and of burying every text of doubtful meaning. The corrupters of the Christian doctrine have no such reserve. The doctrines of the divinity of the Son ; the incarnation ;

the satisfaction of the cross as a sacrifice, in the literal meaning of the word ; the mediatorial intercession ; the influences of the Spirit ; the eternity of future punishment—are topics of popular discussion with those who would deny or pervert these doctrines : and we may judge by their success what our own might be, if we would but meet our antagonists on their own ground. The common people, we find, enter into the force, though they do not perceive the sophistry of their arguments. The same people would much more enter into the internal evidence of the genuine doctrine of the gospel, if holden out to them, not in parts, studiously divested of whatever may seem mysterious ; not with accommodations to the prevailing fashion of opinions—but entire and undisguised. Nor are the laity to shut their ears, against these disputations, as niceties in which they are not concerned, or difficulties above the reach of their abilities : and least of all are they to neglect those disquisitions which immediately respect the interpretation of texts. Every sentence of the Bible is from God, and every man is interested in the meaning of it. The teacher, therefore, is to expound, and the disciple to hear and read with diligence ; and much might be the fruit of the blessing of God on their united exertions. And this I infer, not only from a general consideration of the nature of the gospel doctrine, and the cast of the Scripture language, which is admirably accommodated to vulgar apprehensions, but from a fact which has happened to fall much within my own observation,—the proficiency, I mean, that we often find, in some single science, of men who have never had a liberal education, and who, except in that particular subject

on which they have bestowed pains and attention, remain ignorant and illiterate to the end of their lives. The sciences are said, and they are truly said, to have that mutual connexion, that any one of them may be the better understood for an insight into the rest. And there is, perhaps, no branch of knowledge which receives more illustration from all the rest than the science of religion; yet it hath, like every other, its own internal principles on which it rests, with the knowledge of which, without any other, a great progress may be made. And these lie much more open to the apprehension of an uncultivated understanding than the principles of certain abstruse science; such as geometry, for instance, or astronomy, in which I have known plain men, who could set up no pretensions to general learning, make distinguished attainments.

Under these persuasions, I shall not scruple to attempt a disquisition, which, on the first view of it, might seem adapted only to a learned auditory. And I trust that I shall speak to your understandings.

I propose to consider what may be the most frequent import of the phrase of 'our Lord's coming.' And it will, if I mistake not, appear, that the figurative use of it, to denote the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, is very rare, if not altogether unexampled in the Scriptures of the New Testament; except, perhaps, in some passages of the book of Revelation: that, on the other hand, the use of it in the literal sense is frequent, warning the Christian world of an event to be wished by the faithful, and dreaded by the impenitent—a visible descent of our Lord from heaven, as visible to all the world as his ascension was

to the apostles; a coming of our Lord in all the majesty of the Godhead, to judge the quick and dead, to receive his servants into glory, and send the wicked into outer darkness.

In the epistles of St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. James, we find frequent mention of the coming of our Lord, in terms which, like those of the text, may at first seem to imply an expectation in those writers of his speedy arrival. There can be no question that the coming of our Lord literally signifies his coming in person to the general judgment, and that it was sometimes used in this literal sense by our Lord himself; as in the 25th chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, where the Son of man is described as coming in his glory, as sitting on the throne of his glory, as separating the just and the wicked, and pronouncing the final sentence. But, as it would be very unreasonable to suppose that the inspired writers, though ignorant of the times and seasons which the Father hath put in his own power, could be under so great a delusion as to look for the end of the world in their own days—for this reason it has been imagined, that wherever in the epistles of the apostles such assertions occur as those I have mentioned, the coming of our Lord is not to be taken in the literal meaning of the phrase, but that we are to look for something which was really at hand when these epistles were written, and which, in some figurative sense, might be called his coming. And such an event the learned think they find in the destruction of Jerusalem, which may seem, indeed, no insignificant type of the final destruction of the enemies of God and Christ. But, if we recur to the passages wherein the approach of Christ's kingdom is mentioned, we

shall find that in most of them, I believe it might be said in all, the mention of the final judgment might be of much importance to the writer's argument, while that of the destruction of Jerusalem could be of none. 'The coming of our Lord is a topic which the holy penmen employ, when they find occasion to exhort the brethren to a steady perseverance in the profession of the gospel, and a patient endurance of those trying afflictions, with which the providence of God, in the first ages of the church, was pleased to exercise his servants. Upon these occasions, to confirm the persecuted Christian's wavering faith, to revive his weary hope, to invigorate his drooping zeal, nothing could be more effectual than to set before him the prospect of that happy consummation, when his Lord should come to take him to himself, and change his short-lived sorrows into endless joy. On the other hand, nothing, upon these occasions, could be more out of season, than to bring in view an approaching period of increased affliction—for such was the season of the Jewish war to be. The believing Jews, favoured as they were in many instances, were still sharers, in no small degree, in the common calamity of their country. They had been trained by our Lord himself to no other expectation. He had spoken explicitly of the siege of Jerusalem as a time of distress and danger to the very elect of God. Again, if the careless and indifferent were at any time to be awakened to a sense of danger, the last judgment was likely to afford a more prevailing argument than the prospect of the temporal ruin impending over the Jewish nation; or indeed, than any thing else which the phrase of 'our Lord's coming,' according to

any figurative interpretation of it, can denote. It should seem, therefore, that in all those passages of the epistles in which the coming of our Lord is holden out, either as a motive to patience and perseverance, or to keep alive that spirit of vigilance and caution which is necessary to make our calling sure—it should seem, that in all these passages, the coming is to be taken literally for our Lord's personal coming at the last day; and that the figure is rather to be sought in those expressions which, in their literal meaning, might seem to announce his immediate arrival. And this St. Peter seems to suggest, when he tells us, in his second epistle, that the terms of soon and late are to be very differently understood, when applied to the great operations of Providence, and to the ordinary occurrences of human life. 'The Lord,' says he, "is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.' Soon and late are words whereby a comparison is rather intended of the mutual proportion of different intervals of time, than the magnitude of any one by itself defined; and the same thing may be said to be coming either soon or late, according as the distance of it is compared with a longer or a shorter period of duration. Thus, although the day of judgment was removed undoubtedly by an interval of many ages from the age of the apostles, yet it might in their days be said to be at hand, if its distance from them was but a small part of its original distance from the creation of the world:—that is, if its distance then was but a small part of the whole period of the world's existence, which is the standard, in reference to which, so long as the world

shall last, all other portions of time may be by us most properly denominated long or short. There is again another use of the words soon and late, whereby any one portion of time, taken singly, is understood to be compared, not, with any other, but with the number of events that are to come to pass in it in natural consequence and succession. If the events are few in proportion to the time, the succession must be slow, and the time may be called long. If they are many, the succession must be quick, and the time may be called short, in respect of the number of events, whatever be the absolute extent of it.—It seems to be in this sense that expressions denoting speediness of event are applied by the sacred writers to our Lord's coming. In the day of Messiah the prince, in the interval between our Lord's ascension and his coming again to judgment, the world was to be gradually prepared and ripened for its end. The apostles were to carry the tidings of salvation to the extremities of the earth. They were to be brought before kings and rulers, and to water the new-planted churches with their blood. Vengeance was to be executed on the unbelieving Jews, by the destruction of their city, and the dispersion of their nation. The Pagan idolatry was to be extirpated—the man of sin to be revealed. Jerusalem is yet to be trodden down; the remnant of Israel is to be brought back; the elect of God to be gathered from the four winds of heaven. And when the apostles speak of that event as at hand, which is to close this great scheme of Providence—a scheme in its parts so extensive and so various—they mean to intimate how busily the great work is going on, and with what confidence, from what they saw accomplished in their

own days, the first Christians might expect in due time the promised consummation.

That they are to be thus understood may be collected from our Lord's own parable of the fig-tree, and the application which he teaches us to make of it. After a minute prediction of the distresses of the Jewish war, and the destruction of Jerusalem, and a very general mention of his second coming, as a thing to follow in its appointed season, he adds, 'Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: when its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, ye know that summer is nigh. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.' That 'it' is near; so we read in our English Bibles; and expositors render the word 'it,' by the ruin foretold, or the desolation spoken of. But what was the ruin foretold, or desolation spoken of? The ruin of the Jewish nation—the desolation of Jerusalem. What were all these things, which, when they should see, they might know it to be near? All the particulars of our Saviour's detail; that is to say, the destruction of Jerusalem, with all the circumstances of confusion and distress with which it was to be accompanied. This exposition, therefore, makes, as I conceive, the desolation of Jerusalem the prognostic of itself,—the sign and the thing signified the same. The true rendering of the original I take to be, 'So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that he is near at the doors.' He,—that is, the Son of man, spoken of in the verses immediately preceding as coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. The approach of summer, says our Lord, is not more surely indicated by the first appearances of spring, than the

final destruction of the wicked by the beginnings of vengeance on this impenitent people. The opening of the vernal blossom is the first step in a natural process, which necessarily terminates in the ripening of the summer fruits; and the rejection of the Jews, and the adoption of the believing Gentiles, is the first step in the execution of a settled plan of Providence, which inevitably terminates in the general judgment. The chain of physical causes, in the one case, is not more uninterrupted, or more certainly productive of the ultimate effect, than the chain of moral causes in the other. 'Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.' All these things, in this sentence, must unquestionably denote the same things which are denoted by the same words just before. Just before, the same words denoted those particular circumstances of the Jewish war which were included in our Lord's prediction. All those signs which answer to the fig-tree's budding leaves, the apostles and their contemporaries, at least some of that generation, were to see. But as the thing portended is not included among the signs, it was not at all implied in this declaration that any of them were to live to see the harvest,—the coming of our Lord in glory.

I persuade myself that I have shown that our Lord's coming, whenever it is mentioned by the apostles in their epistles as a motive to a holy life, is always to be taken literally for his personal coming at the last day.

It may put the matter still further out of doubt, to observe, that the passage where, of all others in this part of Scripture, a figurative interpretation of the phrase of 'our Lord's coming' would be the

most necessary, if the figure did not lie in the expressions that seem to intimate its near approach, happens to be one in which our Lord's coming cannot but be literally taken. The passage to which I allude is in the fourth chapter of St. Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians, from the thirteenth verse to the end. The apostle, to comfort the Thessalonian brethren concerning their deceased friends, reminds them of the resurrection; and tells them, that those who were already dead would as surely have their part in a happy immortality as the Christians that should be living at the time of our Lord's coming. Upon this occasion, his expressions, taken literally, would imply that he included himself, with many of those to whom these consolations were addressed, in the number of those who should remain alive at the last day. This turn of the expression naturally arose from the strong hold that the expectation of the thing, in its due season, had taken of the writer's imagination, and from his full persuasion of the truth of the doctrine he was asserting; namely, that those who should die before our Lord's coming, and those who should then be alive, would find themselves quite upon an even footing. In the confident expectation of his own reward, his intermediate dissolution was a matter of so much indifference to him that overlooks it. His expression, however, was so strong, that his meaning was mistaken, or as I rather think, misrepresented. There seem to have been a sect in the apostolic age,—in which sect, however, the apostles themselves were not, as some have absurdly maintained, included,—but there seems to have been a sect which looked for the resurrection in their own time. Some of these

persons seem to have taken advantage of St. Paul's expressions in this passage, to represent him as favouring their opinion. This occasioned the second epistle to the Thessalonians, in which the apostle peremptorily decides against that doctrine; maintaining that the man of sin is to be revealed, and a long consequence of events to run out, before the day of judgment can come; and he desires that no expression of his may be understood of its speedy arrival;—which proves, if the thing needed further proof than I have already given of it, that the coming mentioned in his former epistle is the coming to judgment; and that whatever he had said of the day of coming as at hand, was to be understood only of the certainty of that coming.

SERMON XIV.

THE J U D G M E N T.

BY BISHOP HORSLEY.

S E R M O N X I V .

MATT. XVI. 28.

Verily, I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

THESE remarkable words stand in the conclusion of a certain discourse, with the subject of which, as they have been generally understood, they seem to be but little connected. It must therefore be my business to establish what I take to be their true meaning, before I attempt to enlarge upon the momentous doctrine which I conceive to be contained in them.

The marks of horror and aversion with which our Lord's disciples received the first intimations of his sufferings, gave occasion to a seasonable lecture upon the necessity of self-denial, as the means appointed by Providence for the attainment of future happiness and glory. 'If any one,' says our Lord 'would come after me,' if any one pretends to be my disciple, 'let him take up his cross and follow me.' To enforce this precept, as prescribing a conduct, which, afflictive as it may seem for the present.

is yet no other than it is every man's truest interest to pursue, he reminds his hearers of the infinite disproportion between time and eternity; he assures them of the certainty of a day of retribution; and to that assurance he subjoins the declaration of the text, as a weighty truth, in which they were deeply interested; for so much the earnestness with which it seems to have been delivered speaks. 'Verily, I say unto you;' these are words bespeaking a most serious attention; 'Verily, I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.'

Here then is an assertion concerning some persons who were present at this discourse of our Lord's, that they 'should not taste of death' before a *certain time*; which time is described as that when 'the Son of man should be seen 'coming in his kingdom.' Observe, it is not simply the time when the Son of man should come, but the time when he should come *in his kingdom*, and when he should be *seen* so coming. In order to ascertain the meaning of this assertion, the first point must be to determine, if possible, what may be the particular time which is thus described. From the resolution of this question, it will probably appear in what sense, figurative or literal, it might be affirmed of any who were present at this discourse, that they should not taste of death *before* that time; also, who they might be at whom the words 'some standing here' may be supposed to have been pointed. And when we shall have discovered who they were of whom our Lord spake, and what it was he spake concerning them, it is likely we shall then discern for what purpose of general edification the par-

ticular destiny of those persons was thus publicly declared.

Many expositors, both ancient and modern, by 'the coming of the Son of man,' in this text, have understood the transfiguration. This notion probably takes its rise from the manner in which St. Peter mentions that memorable transaction, in the first chapter of his second catholic epistle; where, speaking of himself as present upon that occasion in the holy mountain, he says that he was then an eye-witness of the majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, perhaps, the hint was taken, that the transfiguration might be considered as the first manifestation of our Lord in glory to the sons of men, and that the apostles, who were permitted to be present, might be said to have seen the Son of man at that time coming in his kingdom; and it must be confessed, that no violence is done to the phrase of 'the coming of the Son of man,' considered by itself, in this interpretation. But, if it be admitted,—if the time described as that when the Son of man should be seen coming in his kingdom, be understood to have been the time of the transfiguration, what will be the amount of the solemn asseveration in the text? Nothing more than this,—that in the numerous assembly to which our Lord was speaking, composed perhaps of persons of all ages, there were some,—the expressions certainly intimate no great number,—but some few of this great multitude there were, who were not to die within a week; for so much was the utmost interval of time between this discourse and the transfiguration. Our great Lord and Master was not accustomed to amuse his followers with any such nugatory predictions.

The like argument sets aside another interpretation, in which our Lord's ascension and the mission of the Holy Ghost are considered as the 'coming in his kingdom' intended in the text. Of what importance was it to tell a numerous assembly, (for it was not to the disciples in particular, but to the whole multitude, as we learn from St. Mark, that this discourse was addressed,)—to what purpose, I say, could it be, to tell them that there were some among them who were destined to live half a year?

Both these interpretations have given way to a third, in which 'the coming of our Lord in his kingdom' is supposed to denote the epoch of the destruction of Jerusalem. This exposition is perhaps not so well warranted as hath been generally imagined, by the usual import of the phrase of the 'coming of the Son of man,' in other passages of holy writ. There is no question but that the coming of our Lord, taken literally, signifies his coming in person to the general judgment; and, if the time permitted me to enter upon a minute examination of the several texts wherein the phrase occurs, it might perhaps appear, that, except in the book of Revelations, the figurative sense is exceedingly rare in the Scriptures of the New Testament, if not altogether unexampled. Be that as it may, there is no question but that the coming of our Lord, taken literally, signifies his coming in person to the general judgment; and the close connexion of the words of the text with what immediately precedes, in our Lord's discourse, makes it unreasonable, in my judgment, to look for any thing here but the literal meaning. In the verse next before the text, our Lord speaks of the coming of the Son of man in terms that necessarily limit the notion of his

coming to that of his last coming to the general judgment. 'For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.' And then he adds, 'Verily, I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.' First, it is said the Son of man shall come;—it is immediately added, that some then present should see him coming. To what purpose is this second declaration, but as a repetition of the first, with the addition of a circumstance which might interest the audience in the event, and awaken their serious attention to it? 'I will come, and some of you shall see me coming.' Can it be supposed, that in such an asseveration, the word to come may bear two different senses; and that the coming, of which it was said that it should be seen, should not be visible? But what then? Did our Lord actually aver that any of those who upon this occasion were his hearers, should live to the day of the general judgment? It cannot be supposed: that were to ascribe to him a prediction which the event of things hath falsified. Mark his words: 'There be some standing here, who shall not taste of death.' He says not, 'who shall not die,' but 'who shall not *taste* of death.' 'Not to taste of death, is not to feel the pains of it—not to taste its bitterness. In this sense was the same expression used by our Lord upon other occasions, as was, indeed, the more simple expression of not dying. 'If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.' The expression is to be understood with reference to the intermediate state between death and the final judgment, in which the souls, both of

the righteous and the wicked, exist in a conscious state—the one comforted with the hope and prospect of their future glory, the other mortified with the expectation of torment. The promise to the saints, that they shall never taste of death, is without limitation of time;—in the text, a time being set, until which the persons intended shall not taste of death, it is implied that then they shall taste it. The departure of the wicked into everlasting torment is, in Scripture, called the second death. This is the death from which Christ came to save penitent sinners; and to this the impenitent remain obnoxious. The pangs and horrors of it will be such, that the evil of natural death, in comparison, may well be overlooked; and it may be said of the wicked, that they shall have no real taste of death till they taste it in the burning lake, from whence the smoke of their torment shall ascend for ever and ever. This is what our Lord insinuates in the alarming menace of the text;—this, at least, is the most literal exposition that the words will bear; and it connects them more than any other with the scope and occasion of the whole discourse. ‘Whosoever,’ says our Lord, ‘will lose his life, shall find it;—shall find, instead of the life he loses here, a better in the world to come: ‘and whosoever will save his life, shall lose it;—shall lose that life which alone is worth his care: ‘for what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?’ For there will come a day of judgment and retribution;—the Son of man—he who now converses with you in a human form—shall ‘come in the glory of the Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man ac-

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cording to his works.' On them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, have sought for life and immortality—on them he shall bestow glory and happiness, honour and praise; but shame and rebuke, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil. The purport of the discourse was to enforce a just contempt both of the enjoyments and of the sufferings of the present life, from the consideration of the better enjoyments and of the heavier sufferings of the life to come; and because the discourse was occasioned by a fear which the disciples had betrayed of the sufferings of this world, for which another fear might seem the best antagonist,—for this reason, the point chiefly insisted on, is the magnitude of the loss to them who should lose their souls. To give this consideration its full effect, the hearers are told 'that there were those among themselves who stood in this dangerous predicament. 'There be some standing here, who shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom;' and then will they be doomed to endless sufferings, in comparison with which the previous pangs of natural death are nothing. 'Flatter not yourselves that these threatenings will never be executed,—that none will be so incorrigibly bad as to incur the extremity of these punishments: verily, I say unto you, there are present, in this very assembly,—there are persons standing here, who will be criminal in that degree, that they will inevitably feel the severity of vindictive justice,—persons who now perhaps hear these warnings with incredulity and contempt: but the time will come, when they will see the Son of man, whom they despised, whom they rejected, whom they persecuted, coming to execute ven-

geance on them who have not known God, nor obeyed the gospel; and then will they be doomed to endless sufferings, in comparison with which the previous pangs of natural death are nothing.'

It will be proper, however, to consider, whether, among the hearers of this discourse, there might be any at whom it may be probable that our Lord should point so express a denunciation of final destruction.

'There are some standing here.' The original words, according to the reading which our English translators seem to have followed, might be more exactly rendered, 'There are certain persons standing here;' where the expression 'certain persons' hath just the same definite sense as 'a certain person,' the force of the plural number being only that it is a more reserved, and, for that reason, 'a more alarming way of pointing at an individual. Now, in the assembly to which our Lord was speaking, 'a certain person,' it may well be supposed, was present, whom charity herself may hardly scruple to include among the miserable objects of God's final vengeance. The son of perdition, Judas the traitor, was standing there. Our Saviour's first prediction of his passion was that which gave occasion to this whole discourse. It may reasonably be supposed, that the tragical conclusion of his life on earth was present to his mind, with all its horrid circumstances; and, among these, none was likely to make a more painful impression than the treason of his base disciple. His mind possessed with these objects, when the scene of the general judgment comes in view,—the traitor standing in his sight,—his crime foreseen,—the sordid motives of it understood,—the fore-

thought of the fallen apostle's punishment could not but present itself; and this drew from our divine instructor that alarming menace, which must have struck a chill of horror to the heart of every one that heard it, and the more because the particular application of it was not at the time understood. This was the effect intended. Our Lord meant to impress his audience with a just and affecting sense of the magnitude of those evils, the sharpness of those pains, which none but the ungodly shall ever feel, and from which none of the ungodly shall ever escape.

Nor in this passage only, but in every page of holy writ, are these terrors displayed, in expressions studiously adapted to lay hold of the imagination of mankind, and awaken the most thoughtless to such an habitual sense of danger as might be sufficient to overcome the most powerful allurements of vice. 'The wicked are to go into outer darkness; there is to be weeping and gnashing of teeth; they are to depart into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; there they shall drink of the wrath of God, poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation.' Whatever there may be of figure in some of these expressions, as much as this they certainly import,—that the future state of the wicked will be a state of exquisite torment, both of body and mind,—of torments, not only intense in degree, but incapable of intermission, cure, or end,—a condition of unmixed and perfect evil, not less deprived of future hope than of present enjoyment.

It is amazing, that a danger so strongly set forth should be disregarded; and this is the more amaz-

ing, when we take a view of the particular casts and complexions of character among which this disregard is chiefly found. They may be reduced to three different classes, according to the three different passions by which they are severally overcome,—ambition, avarice, and sensuality. Personal consequence is the object of the first class; wealth, of the second; pleasure, of the third. Personal consequence is not to be acquired but by great undertakings, bold in the first conception, difficult in execution, extensive in consequence. Such undertakings demand great abilities. Accordingly, we commonly find in the ambitious man a superiority of parts, in some measure proportioned to the magnitude of his designs: it is his particular talent to weigh distant consequences, to provide against them, and to turn every thing, by a deep policy and forecast, to his own advantage. It might be expected, that this sagacity of understanding would restrain him from the desperate folly of sacrificing an unfading crown for that glory that must shortly pass away. Again, your avaricious money-getting man is generally a character of wonderful discretion. It might be expected that he would be exact to count his gains, and would be the last to barter possessions which he might hold for ever, for a wealth that shall be taken from him, and shall not profit him in the day of wrath. Then, for those servants of sin, the effeminate sons of sensual pleasure, these are a feeble, timid race. It might be expected that these, of all men, would want firmness to brave the danger. Yet so it is,—the ambitious pursues a conduct which must end in shame; the miser, to be rich now, makes himself poor for ever; and the tender, delicate

voluptuary shrinks not at the thought of endless burnings!

These things could not be, but for one of these two reasons, either that there is some lurking incredulity in men, 'an evil heart of unbelief,' that admits not the gospel doctrine of punishment in its full extent; or, that their imaginations set the danger at a prodigious distance.

The Scriptures are not more explicit in the threatenings of wrath upon the impenitent, than in general assertions of God's forbearance and mercy. These assertions are confirmed by the voice of nature, which loudly proclaims the goodness as well as the power of the universal Lord. Man is frail and imperfect in his original constitution. This, too, is the doctrine of the Scriptures; and every man's experience unhappily confirms it. Human life, by the appointment of Providence, is short. 'He hath made our days as it were a span long.' "Is it, then, to be supposed, that this good, this merciful, this long-suffering God, should doom his frail, imperfect creature, man, to endless punishment for the follies,—call them, if you please, the crimes, of a short life? Is he injured by our crimes, that he should seek this vast revenge; or does his nature delight in groans and lamentations? It cannot be supposed. What revelation declares of the future condition of the wicked, is prophecy; and prophecy, we know, deals in poetical and exaggerated expressions." Such, perhaps is the language which the sinner holds within himself, when he is warned of the wrath to come; and such language he is taught to hold, in the writings and sermons of our modern sectaries. He is taught, that the punishment threatened is far more

heavy than will be executed : he is told, that the words which, in their literal meaning, denote endless duration, are, upon many occasions in Scripture, as in common speech, used figuratively or abusively, to denote very long, but yet definite, periods of time. These notions are inculcated in the writings, not of infidels, but of men who, with all their errors, must be numbered among the friends and advocates of virtue and religion ;—but, while we willingly bear witness to their worth, we must not the less strenuously resist their dangerous innovations.

The question concerning the eternity of punishment, (like some others, which, considered merely as questions of philosophy, may be of long and difficult discussion) might be brought to a speedy determination, if men, before they heat themselves with argument, would impartially consider how far reason, in her natural strength, may be competent to the inquiry. I do not mean to affirm generally that reason is not a judge in matters of religion : but I do maintain, that there are certain points concerning the nature of the Deity and the schemes of Providence, upon which reason is dumb and revelation is explicit ; and that, in these points, there is no certain guide but the plain, obvious meaning of the written word. The question concerning the eternal duration of the torments of the wicked is one of these. From any natural knowledge that we have of the Divine character, it never can be proved that the scheme of eternal punishment is unworthy of him.

It cannot be proved that this scheme is inconsistent with his natural perfections,—his essential goodness. What is essential goodness ? It is

usually defined by a single property,—the love of virtue for its own sake. The definition is good, as far as it goes; but is it complete? Does it comprehend the whole of the thing intended? Perhaps not. Virtue and vice are opposites: love and hate are opposites. A consistent character must bear opposite affections toward opposite things. To love virtue, therefore, for its own sake, and to hate vice for its own sake, may equally belong to the character of essential goodness; and thus, as virtue in itself, and for its own sake, must be the object of God's love and favour; so, incurable vice, in itself, and for its own sake, may be the object of his hatred and persecution.

Again, it cannot be proved that the scheme of eternal punishment is inconsistent with the relative perfections of the Deity—with those attributes which are displayed in his dealings with the rational part of his creation: for who is he that shall determine in what proportions the attributes of justice and mercy, forbearance and severity, ought to be mixed up in the character of the Supreme Governor of the universe?

Nor can it be proved that eternal punishment is inconsistent with the schemes of God's moral government: for who can define the extent of that government? Who among the sons of men hath an exact understanding of its ends, a knowledge of its various parts, and of their mutual relations and dependencies? Who is he that shall explain by what motives the righteous are to be preserved from falling from their future state of glory? That they shall not fall, we have the comfortable assurance of God's word. But by what means is the security of their state to be effected? Un-

questionably by the influence of moral motives upon the minds of free and rational agents. But who is so enlightened, as to foresee what particular motives may be the fittest for the purpose? Who can say, These might be sufficient,—these are superfluous? Is it impossible that, among other motives, the sufferings of the wicked may have a salutary effect? And shall God spare the wicked, if the preservation of the righteous should call for the perpetual example of their punishment?—Since, then, no proof can be deduced, from any natural knowledge that we have of God, that the scheme of eternal punishment is unworthy of the Divine character,—since there is no proof that it is inconsistent either with the natural perfections of God, or with his relative attributes,—since it may be necessary to the ends of his government,—upon what grounds do we proceed, when we pretend to interpret, to qualify, and to extenuate the threatenings of holy writ?

The original frailty of human nature, and the providential shortness of human life, are alleged to no purpose in this argument. Eternal punishment is not denounced against the frail, but against the hardened and perverse; and life is to be esteemed long or short, not from any proportion it may bear to eternity, (which would be equally none at all, though it were protracted to ten thousand times its ordinary length,) but according as the space of it may be more or less than may be just sufficient for the purposes of such a state as our present life is, of discipline and probation. There must be a certain length of time, the precise measure of which can be known to none but God, within which, the promises and the threatenings of the gospel, joined

with the experience which every man's life affords of God's power and providence—of the instability and vanity of all worldly enjoyments,—there must, in the nature of things, be a certain measure of time, within which, if at all, this state of experience, joined with future hopes and fears, must produce certain degrees of improvement in moral wisdom and in virtuous habit. If, in all that time, no effect is wrought, the impediment can only have arisen from incurable self-will and obstinacy. If the ordinary period of life be more than is precisely sufficient for this trial and cultivation of the character, those characters which shall show themselves incorrigibly bad, will have no claim upon the justice or the goodness of God, to abridge the time of their existence in misery, so that it may bear some certain proportion to the short period of their wicked lives. Qualities are not to be measured by duration: they bear no more relation to it than they do to space. The hatefulness of sin is seated in itself—in its own internal quality of evil: by that its ill-deservings are to be measured; not by the narrowness of the limits, either of time or place, within which the good providence of God hath confined its power of doing mischief.

If, on any ground, it were safe to indulge a hope that the suffering of the wicked may have an end, it would be upon the principle adopted by the great Origen, and by other eminent examples of learning and piety which our own times have seen,—that the actual endurance of punishment in the next life will produce effects to which the apprehension of it in this had been insufficient, and end, after a long course of ages, in the reformation of the worst characters. But the principle that this

effect is possible—that the heart may be reclaimed by force, is at best precarious; and the only safe principle of human conduct is the belief, that unrepented sin will suffer endless punishment hereafter.

Perhaps, the distance at which imagination sets the prospect of future punishment, may have a more general influence in diminishing the effect of God's merciful warnings, than any sceptical doubts about the intensity or the duration of the sufferings of the wicked. The Spirit of God means to awaken us from this delusion, when he tells us by the apostles and holy men of old, that the 'coming of the Lord draweth nigh.' He means, by these declarations, to remind every man that his particular doom is near: for whatever may be the season appointed in the secret counsels of God, for 'that great and terrible day, when the heavens and the earth shall flee from the face of him who shall be seated on the throne, and their place shall be no more found;' whatever may be the destined time of this public catastrophe, the end of the world, with respect to every individual, takes place at the conclusion of his own life. In the grave there will be no repentance; no virtues can be acquired, no evil characters thrown off. With that character, whether of virtue or of vice, with which a man leaves the world, with that he must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. In that moment, therefore, in which his present life ends, every man's future condition becomes irreversibly determined. In this sense, to every one that standeth here, 'the coming of the Lord draweth nigh,' the Judge is at the door; let us 'watch, therefore, and pray;' watch over ourselves, and pray for the succours of God's grace, that we may be able

to stand before the Son of man. Nor shall vigilance and prayer be ineffectual. On the incorrigible and perverse,—on those who mock at God's threatenings, and reject his promises,—on these only the severity of wrath will fall. But, for those who lay these warnings seriously to heart, who dread the pollution of the world, and flee from sin as from a serpent, who fear God's displeasure more than death, and seek his favour more than life, though much of frailty will to the last adhere to them, yet these are the objects of the Father's mercy—of the Redeemer's love. For these he died, for these he pleads, these he supports and strengthens with his Spirit, these he shall lead with him triumphant to the mansions of glory, when Sin and Death shall be cast into the lake of fire.

THE END. •

